



THE WAY, THE TRUTH, THE LIFE

Posted on August 1, 2023 by Father Louis



Christ's famous phrase, "I am the Way, the Truth and the Life" (Jn 14:6) provides Christians with an invaluable route to conversion. Here are some explanations.

I. "I am the Way"

First of all, whatever our vocation—our path is called Jesus. It's all about following Jesus. He chooses the way, and I walk behind. Sometimes we're tempted to organize our lives as we see fit, and once we've got everything organized, we pray to Jesus to make our plans a success. In other words, we say to Jesus: come and follow me! It seems to me, however, that in the Gospel it's the other way around: it's Jesus who tells us—come and follow me!

You can't choose your path! "I would never have chosen to have a fourth child right away," says one mother. We don't choose our path; we accept it as a mystery.

However, we do choose how to move forward along that path—by dragging a ball and chain, or by saying a big "yes" to this path offered by providence. To say yes to the path is to say yes to Jesus; "I am the way" says Jesus!

So, I have to love my real situation today, however imperfect it may be. Of course, I can and must hope that this path will become smoother and clearer—I must hope to get married, have a child, find work, heal from a health problem or a wound of the heart—but in the meantime, I must love this path as it is, because it's the one Jesus wants me to follow.

Let's listen to the words of Wanda Poltawska, the spiritual little sister of Saint John Paul II, a Polish mother in great pain: "Loving God also means loving the path he has laid out for us. Very often, in fact, we sincerely want to love God... but we hate the path he leads us along!"

We need the strength of Grace to love the path God has laid out for me, to fully consent to what providence is giving me to live today. Let's be gentle and patient with ourselves—sometimes we have to wrestle with God like Jacob, bumping up against His will, going through stages of inner anger or discouragement, before we can say a total, "Yes." Yet however far we may be from true inner peace and authentic holiness, Jesus is with each and every one of us today; right where we are. Jesus did not

say: "I am the end of the road"—but: "I am the way."

II. "I am the Truth"

Jesus goes on to say, and here we hear something quite unexpected—truth is not a theory, nor a set of dogmas, however beautiful they may be. Truth is first and foremost—someone: "I am the Truth," says Jesus. He is the Word in Whom God says everything, without the slightest lie.

Whereas for us, in our hearts and in our actions, truth and lies are inextricably intertwined. To say that someone is false does not inspire confidence! Only Jesus is "true": "He was not yes and no," writes Saint Paul, "but yes in him" (2 Cor 1:19).

So, it's not just a question of adhering to a doctrine, but to someone, to Jesus. To know the truth is to know Jesus in an ever more personal way, to become a friend of Jesus, to live with Him, to stand close to Him, to listen to Him and talk to Him.

Isn't my faith too cerebral, in the sense that it consists solely of my mind adhering to truths about God? Pope Francis often warns us against the danger of intellectualism. We need the Holy Spirit to bring our faith down from our heads into our hearts, to teach us to truly encounter Jesus, to let Him set His eyes on our souls, on our miseries, on our sins, not to shy away from the light of His gaze in order to get to the truth about ourselves.

III. "I am Life"

...says Jesus. Don't we sometimes look at the banality of our daily lives and exclaim: "This is no life. I don't want to go on like this! I want to live life to the full! We're all waiting, more or less consciously, for something better, for fulfillment, for success, for liberation. Yet the years go by, life moves on, and nothing happens! Life remains the same, the daily dullness returns every morning!

But let's make no mistake—the novelty we're hoping for won't come from external events, in a life that's finally become exciting. The only novelty that can free us from routine lies within us. This inner source has a name and a face. It is not light or energy. It is Someone—the Holy Spirit. We sing in the Creed that

He gives life: vivificantem. For Saint John Paul II, this was the most beautiful and important word in the Creed. This true life is expressed by St. Paul: "I live, but it is no longer I; it is Christ who lives in me. (Gal 2:20) This is the real liberation we've been waiting for! I live, but it's no longer me. It's no longer an existence confined solely to my ego—my health, my reputation, my plans, my fulfillment... We suffocate when we remain centered on ourselves! True life is the one that frees me from my ego, my isolation and my narrowness, and transforms the little things of each day into permanent praise.

So, in the words of Saint Elisabeth de La Trinité, "One is never banal! Oh," she continues, "how empty is everything that has not been done for God and with God! Please, mark everything with the seal of love! If I were to start my life all over again, how I'd never waste another moment! It's so serious, so serious, I'd like to live every minute full!"

Let's ask the Holy Spirit to help us live in truth on the Paschal path traced out by Jesus. It is Jesus who gives the Holy Spirit, but it is Mary who draws Him!

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Featured: *Christ Pantocrator and the Last Judgment*, mosaic in the Baptistery of San Giovanni in Florence, by the Florentine master, ca. 1300.
