

Speak the Truth with Love
By Metropolitan Saba (Isper)

Much is said these days about “truth.” All people cling to their own truth, seeing it from their own perspective, whether for personal benefit or the interests of their group. Yet the Absolute Truth, God Himself, is often the most forgotten. Strangely, people still appeal to Him to justify their cause, and to strengthen their battle to obtain what they call their rights.

But in our faith, truth is not simply a law or custom—it is God Himself. The Lord said in the Holy Gospel: “I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life” (John 14:6). He is both the Truth and the Way to the Truth. To follow Him, to walk according to His commandments, to love Him and to humble ourselves before Him – these allow His presence to fill us, protecting us and those around us from error and falsehood.

The Lord also says: “If you abide in My word, you are truly My disciples; and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free” (John 8:32).

If you are a follower of Christ, you belong fully to the Truth – not partially, but wholly. The presence of Christ within you purifies you from every stain and falsehood. You cannot belong to Him and to someone else at the same time. Either you open yourself entirely to the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Truth (John 14:17 and 15:26), or you remain divided and unstable.

How, then, can you remain faithful to Him while sin still finds a place in you? Faithfulness lies in your sincere striving toward Him, in following His footsteps wherever they lead, and in remaining conscious always to live in loyalty to Him. Yes, you will face obstacles and temptations either from within yourself or from the outside. Do not be afraid, although the devil never sleeps. “Like a roaring lion, he prowls around looking for someone to devour” (1 Peter 5:8). Do not despair if you fall once or many times. What matters most is that you rise quickly after each fall. Faithfulness to the Lord does not mean you will never sin. Rather, it means that when you do sin, you are ready to repent, to be corrected, and to continue walking toward Him in truth.

The Lord has not left you alone in this struggle. He promised: “I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Comforter to be with you forever, even the Spirit of Truth, whom the world cannot receive because it neither sees Him nor knows Him. But you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you” (John 14:16–17). To stray from the truth, then, is to turn away from the Spirit of God dwelling within you.

People may disagree endlessly about what they call “truth.” But too often they forget that truth cannot be separated from love. If in your pursuit of truth you lose love, you are no longer on the right path. At such moments, you must pause, examine yourself carefully in the light of the Gospel, and repent.

In your search for truth, you may sometimes confuse what is actually the truth with what only appears to be so. Your passions and lack of purity — whether as an individual, a group, a worldly institution, or even a church in this fallen world — play large roles in clouding your vision. Imagine, for example, the magnitude of the deception when you are under pressure from your friends or those around you! Reflect also on how dangerous it becomes when the truth to which you cling and defend is shaped by competing interests, politics, and the struggles for influence and power that dominate this world. To remain faithful, you must be willing to die to yourself in order to live in truth, integrity, and loyalty to God.

Your spiritual confusion will provide you with many justifications, sometimes disguised as logic, self-interest, craftiness, or wisdom. All of this pushes you to walk by the standards of this world, protecting yourself and your reputation, and supporting them with the spirit of the world — a spirit that is not yours if you are a disciple of Christ. For the world does not place its priority on bearing witness to the truth, but rather on cunning and compromise, which stand against the Gospel. The lure of power and influence, and the love of possession can lead you to build a seemingly logical structure for your ambitions, filling it with noble goals that justify your actions — while in reality you are only covering up the evil within and the harm of your behavior.

Do not forget the Gospel’s warning about wolves in sheep’s clothing (Matthew 7:15). You could be that wolf when you let evil lead you to seek your own desires

disguised as virtue, or poison in honey. Be watchful, lest you become a tool of the evil one even while believing you are resisting him. Your distortion of truth is most painful when you direct it against those closest to you. Remember what Christ said: “Because I tell you the truth, you do not believe me” (John 8:45).

The Lord said: “A man’s enemies will be those of his own household” (Matthew 10:36). And the Arab poet reminds us: “The injustice of kin is the hardest to bear.” Your suffering is also made heavier when people label you as belonging to one camp or another, simply because the truth you spoke happened to align with their position. This, too, is part of your cross, if you remain faithful to the Gospel and the teachings of the Church. Expect your reward from the Lord alone. Many before you stood against the entire world and paid a heavy price, yet it was the truth they proclaimed that triumphed in the end.

What grieves the Lord is that some entrusted with His Church busy themselves with things He never asked for, while His children hunger for the word of life and thirst for the living water that could relieve their suffering. While God’s creation longs for salvation, attention is instead directed to pursuits that have nothing to do with salvation, and efforts are poured into superficial concerns that feed and heal no one. Even more painful is that those who clearly understand their evangelical mission and pastoral responsibility are forced to spend their energy correcting distortions, rather than dedicating themselves fully to nurturing true righteousness in the hearts of Christ’s beloved.

And so, you are called to remain steadfast in both truth and love. Speak the truth as you see it, but always with love (Eph. 4:15). The moment you sense within yourself the presence of anger, pride, or malice, remain silent and turn to the Lord in humble prayer. Ask Him to place His word on your lips, so that you may become a real witness to the Truth. As for false witnesses, leave them to the Lord and to the judgment of history.