

## Commentary to the 5th Sunday of Easter - A -

A man passed a funeral parlor. In the window stood a sign "WHY WALK AROUND HALF DEAD



WHEN WE CAN BURY YOU FOR FIFTY DOLLARS?" If we are half dead Christians, we should enlist with Jesus. He who said, "I am the Way!" will recharge us with His spiritual cables and get us into the fast lane.

Theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer was hanged in 1945 by the Nazis. Before his execution, he told a fellow prisoner, "This is the beginning of a new life." Said the prisoner, a British officer, "Dietrich knew the WAY he was going."

A poet wrote that you do not know the meaning of a person's life until he is dead. Is that true of everyone? I think not. But it was true of the Christ and His servant, Dietrich. It could be true of us yet.

Today's chapter 14 begins the farewell address of Jesus to His troops. The theme of today's Gospel is to pick up the sagging morale of His followers. Jesus had informed them that one of them would betray

Him. The apostles must have gone into shock at the news of a mole among them. Their small world was turning upside down. They needed a spiritual tranquilizer in super milligram range. Christ was offering it to them. He was not done with them yet.

We owe that blunt apostle Thomas much. The Master said, "You know the way to the place where I am going." Thomas, who must have been a hot pistol to handle even for Christ, bought none of it. "Lord, we do not know where you are going. How do we know the way?" Thomas wanted a heavily marked AAA roadmap as well as road flares. His doubts provoked Jesus to say, "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life." Just eight words but arguably the most important words spoken in the 5000 years of recorded history.

That line rang like a loud bell in the ears of Thomas and his friends. It still so sounds in the 21st century.

Thomas a Kempis wrote in the 15th century, "Without the Way, there is no going. Without the Truth, there is no knowing. Without the Life, there is no living."

Note what the Master did not say. He did not say, "I am a Way, a form of Truth, and a way of Life." (Unknown) He would not support the pick and choose Catholicism which is popular among us. I am speaking of a smorgasbord Gospel. "I'll take the Beatitudes but not the Eucharist." But CS Lewis said, "Christianity is a statement which, if false, is of no importance and, if true, is of infinite importance. The one thing it cannot be is moderately important."

If you're a cafeteria Catholic, you have started your own religion. You'll have competition, though. There is a new religion starting every five days.

What a pity so hard on the heels of Jesus come the Christians. (Annie Dillard) A popular T-shirt reads, "Jesus, save us from your followers."

Christ's remarkable statement was clearly on the record as unqualified. Had it been otherwise, it is unlikely John, today's author, would have recorded the line for posterity. Indeed John might not have stayed around. Evidence shows he could have made a good living as a writer.

Goethe in the 19th century shouted something we can identify with. "When I go to listen to a preacher, I want to hear of his certainties, not of his doubts. Of the latter I have enough of my own."

I was in Boston. I was lost. I asked a man for directions. He confused me. I asked another and he said, "Follow me and I'll show you the way." The man had become my guide. I relaxed. Happily for us, Jesus is our guide. He does not give directions in hundreds of words. Nor does He say, "You can't miss it." Rather, He informs us confidently that He is the way. More to the point, He says, "Follow me. I'll show you the fast way."

Professors have said to us, "I have taught you the truth as I understand it." But no professor was so presumptuous to say, "I am the Truth." None except One and that is the reason we come here today to worship Him. So we pray the 86th Psalm, "Teach me thy way, O Lord, and I will walk in thy truth." Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Augustine, Thomas Aquinas, and Einstein, great thinkers all, were, like us, confused. They sought the truth. But Jesus is the truth. Big difference that.

The University of Rostock in Germany has chiseled above its main entrance for all students to read: "Many theories but one truth."

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