

NB: This homily follows the readings for the Extraordinary Form of the Mass: James 1:17-21 and John 16:5-14.

- On May 11, 1960, the famous Nazi war criminal, Adolf Eichmann, was kidnapped by Israeli intelligence operatives and brought to Jerusalem for trial. After the war Eichmann had escaped from Europe, and he had been living in Argentina under a false name.
- Because of the controversy surrounding Eichmann, who was responsible for transporting countless Jews to concentration camps and murdering them, *New Yorker* magazine hired a Jewish philosopher to cover the trial. Her name was Hannah Arendt.
- Hannah Arendt was a young woman living in Paris when the Nazis occupation began in 1939. So she moved to New York and began teaching there to avoid persecution.
- And her articles detailing Eichmann's trial were met with a great deal of criticism, because it was thought that there was no way a Jew – especially one who escaped the Nazis – could possibly be objective in her coverage of such a trial.
- But Arendt's critique of the trial centered not on whether or not Eichmann had committed the crimes he was accused of. Those facts were established as Eichmann had confessed to his crimes. And eventually he was found guilty and hanged.
- Arendt's writings focused on whether or not the truth surrounding Eichmann's involvement in the genocide of our Jewish brothers and sisters was fully revealed and understood. Arendt was interested in the evil that is the necessary result when one tries to deny or suppress truth.
- In response to her detractors, Arendt wrote a poignant essay entitled *Truth in Politics*, in which she makes some invaluable points about the nature of truth that we should all consider.
- In looking through the course of history and the way evil has punctuated human history, Arendt noted that man has often positioned himself as an enemy of truth. In order to fulfill his own political agenda, man often tries to distort, bend, or even destroy truth.
- But in the long run, Arendt teaches that truth can never be fully destroyed. While we may be able to hide it, distort it, or suppress it, truth always has a way of eventually making itself known.
- And as Christians we know that this is true because truth is not a thing or simply an idea or concept. Truth is a Person: none other than our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.
- Both of our readings today speak of truth. Our Gospel speaks of the Holy Spirit, whom Christ calls the Spirit of Truth, Who will come to teach us all truth and who will unite us in the truth.
- Our first reading reminds us that we are begotten by the “word of truth that we might be some beginning of His creature.” In other words, we have been begotten by the word of truth so that we might like Him Who Is Truth!
- In this epistle St. James is telling us that as God's creatures, we are created for truth by Him Who Is Truth. Our lives, therefore, should reflect truth! It is incumbent upon us that we should live our lives according to the truth.
- And this is important because on Judgment Day, we will be judged by how well our lives conform to truth as we know it.
- For those of us who know Him, He's going to ask us whether or not we conformed our lives to His will, for to live our lives in any other way than according to His will is to live a lie.

- When we face our Lord on Judgment Day, we will be looking face to face at Him Who Is Truth, and the full truth of how we lived our lives will be laid bare for all to see.
- My point is that *if we truly desire to go to Heaven, then we cannot claim to embrace Jesus, who is the Way, the Truth and the Life, and still consciously choose to live in a way that is inconsistent with the Way He points out to us, with the Truth He reveals to us, or with the Life He holds out to us.*
- To claim one thing and to do another makes us liars. 1 John 2:4 tells us very clearly that the man who says he knows Christ but does not do what He commands is a liar, and the truth is not in him.
- Lying, my friends, is a terrible sin not simply because it deceives other, but also because through constant lying we begin to deceive ourselves! Lies are intended to change, distort or hide the truth.
- Yet the bitter irony is that when we lie over and over, when we consciously choose to embrace a lie by living in a way that is not in accord with God's will, *we* become changed, distorted, and the truth becomes hidden from us because we no longer have eyes to see it.
- It is not truth that changes. Truth cannot change. Because truth is of God, who is the same yesterday, today and forever (cf. Hebrews 13:8), it is immutable and cannot change.
- Sadly, this is reality about truth often escapes modern man. Modern man so often places himself under the totalitarianism of relativism, which leads the poorly formed mind to believe that truth is simply a construct of man.
- Thus we have people today who very earnestly believe that each of us can decide for ourselves what is true, and that each person's opinion is equally valid.
- The popular notion is that you can have your truth, and I can have my truth, and it's okay to disagree as long as no one's feelings get hurt.
- But this is not our Christian belief. Truth is not something that we decide by committee or determine by our feelings. Truth is something beyond us; in fact, it is something that does not depend on us at all. Truth transcends man altogether.
- Thus, as Hannah Arendt so poignantly pointed out in her article *Truth in Politics*, truth has this uncanny ability to make itself known – despite our best efforts to hide it or distort it through our lies and subterfuges.
- Ultimately this is because truth is divine. While some may think God can be thwarted in this life, as Christians we know that if truth is not made known in this life, it will be made known in the next.
- My dear friends, as Catholics we're blessed to enjoy the fullness of the Truth. Christ, Who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life founded our Church, and therefore we have received the full revelation of Christ – the fullness of truth.
- With this in mind, let us each resolve to live our lives in firm accordance with the truths of our Faith, and let us be faithful witnesses to this truth out in the world so that all men might come to know our Lord and be saved by His merciful grace.