

Living in a Spanish speaking country in S America you quickly learn that they can be very blunt when they talk to you, or about you. I was invited to a friends house and was asked by my host: Where are you from skinny? My friend who came with me was asked the same question but was called Curly given that his hair was indeed curly. A common term of endearment to an older person is “Viejo” or Old man.

And imagine my surprise when going for a drink at a bar and my friend (a very rotund clergyman) was constantly but affectionately referred to by the waiter as “mi gordito” – my little fat one!

Whilst it was true, in an English setting we would dare use such terms, even to our best friends. Which makes me wonder about the question: How do we tell the truth, when the truth hurts? How do we hear the truth, when the truth convicts us? And I’m not thinking in terms of our appearance, but of a deeper truth philosophical and theological.

There is truth-telling in the Gospel reading. It’s to do with Jesus drawing people to himself, even saying he is the truth. It’s such a familiar passage – the words of comfort that Jesus says before he dies: “Do not let your hearts be troubled...” This passage actually takes place while the disciples are still sitting around the Passover table. Judas has just left the group to go to do his act of betrayal. It’s late at night. They are all tired. Jesus tells them to love one another. He tells them he is leaving. Peter says he’ll go with him, that he’ll lay down his life for him. Jesus tells the truth: “You think you will lay down your life? You will have denied me three times before it’s even morning.” Then he says: “Look, just believe. Don’t be all upset, just believe.” He paints a picture of dwelling with God, of a union with God to which all believers are called. We’re not called to be alone, we’re called to be united with Christ. “Where I am, there you may be also. And you know the way...” Thomas asks the question they all want to ask: “We do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?”

And Jesus says, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life.”

What does all this mean? Perhaps it is both difficult and easy. What you do with a way is walk on it. And, as you do so, you draw closer to your destination. The first thing is to place your feet upon it. That may be about simply acknowledging Christ when you wake up in the morning, and then walking on through the day, step by step, with him.

Jesus is the Truth. The truth is about telling it like it is – the place to start is always with ourselves. It's what we do in confession – we tell God the truth about ourselves and we hear the truth from God – the truth of forgiveness, as God pours it into our lives.

Jesus is the way, the truth and the life. This life goes on into eternity, because that's what Jesus is about. That's why the way we walk is so important, because it is the way of eternal life. The truth is so important, because the lack of telling it, or the lack of hearing it, will weigh us down and cause us to get in the way of the journey that others are

making. Step by step, we walk the way of Christ. Let us strive to unite our lives with his, to keep in step with him, not to hide any part of ourselves from his love, to pray, to love, to speak the truth; and remember – do not let your hearts be troubled.