



Sovereign Order of Saint John of Jerusalem ®  
Knights of Malta

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## Chancellor's Update

Confusion...Deception...Ignorance

### Whatever Became of Truth?

Often when the media report on events or issues, versions of the accounts by the various venues appear to be different. News reports or political advertisements slant the information describing the person or event so that what is presented is different from reality. Other accounts provide a bare minimum of information or omit data that are relevant to the issue at hand. How are serious people to make a decision on issues, when they are faced with conflicting reports, slanted presentation or missing information? The quest for objective reality or truth is imperiled in today's world.

What is Truth? Truthfulness is a means absolutely necessary to society in order that it may attain its end. To attain to truth is the natural end of the human intellect. Man has the right not to be deceived or given information, which is not in accord with reality. Truth is also described as the state of being the case, fact, actuality, reality, verity, and agreement with fact.

Who is Truth? When He was questioned by Pilate, Jesus responded, *Thou sayest it; I am a king. That is why I was born, and why I have come into the world, to bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears my voice.* (John 18 v. 37) *I am the way, and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father but through Me.* (John 14 v. 6) *You shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free.* (John 8 v. 32)

Saint Thomas Aquinas in the Summa Theologica wrote: "Truth is in God. He is truth itself and the sovereign and first truth. (Q16 article 5 part 1)

Opposition to Truth. A lie is a willful misrepresentation of facts. Affirming as true what is known to be false is called a lie. A liar denies as true what is known to be true. A liar affirms to be true what he knows is false.

Who is the opponent of Truth? Rather than be distracted with individual liars, of whom there are many, it is important to identify the chief liar. Jesus said: *The devil... was a murderer from the beginning, and has not stood in the truth because there is no truth in him. When he tells a lie he speaks from his very nature, for he is a liar and the father of lies.* (John 8 v.44)

Examples of defending Truth. Near the end of the Eighteenth Century a group of fifty-six men dared to proclaim and defend truth to a reigning monarch. "We hold these

truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.” After identifying the injuries and usurpations, these Representatives appealed to the Supreme Judge of the world for the rectitude of their intentions ”that these United Colonies …ought to be Free and Independent States; that they are Absolved from all Allegiance to the British Crown…With a firm reliance on the protection of divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our Lives, our Fortunes and our sacred Honor.” Standing for the truth of their convictions, and relying on divine Providence, they strove to achieve their goal. Many lost their lives and others lost their fortunes, but they achieved their goal by defending truth.

Near the end of the Twentieth Century in Poland, a land under the tyranny of communism, another group of people dared to speak for the rights of the worker. As popular support for the group’s ideas continued to grow, like the American Colonists 200 years earlier, the group sought the blessings of Divine providence. A priest, Father Jerzy Popieluszko, offered Mass and heard confessions for the group. Sensing a threat to its tyrannical power, the Communist government of Poland clamped down on the population and imposed martial law. The only option left to the supportive priest was to preach monthly at a Mass for the Fatherland. “You have to live in Truth to remain spiritually free. Life in Truth consists of giving testimony, acknowledging the Truth and defending it in each situation. Truth never changes. It cannot be destroyed by any decision or legal act. A man who tells the Truth is a free man despite external slavery, imprisonment or custody.” In another sermon he said, “Every day we must be aware that when we are demanding truth from others we must live in truth ourselves.” Because Father Popieluszko’s monthly message continued to provide hope and support for the people of Poland under martial law, he remained a threat to the communist government and like the American colonists two hundred years earlier and like his Lord and Saviour, he also paid with his life.

[How to proclaim Truth and battle evil in the Twenty-first Century?](#) Aware of the eternal conflict between Truth and falsehood, Saint Peter advised his followers: *Your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, goes about seeking someone to devour.* (1 Peter 5 v. 8) Perhaps some advice from the famous Chinese military strategist Sun Tzu in 500 B.C. would be useful. “If a man knows himself and knows his opponent, he need not fear a hundred battles.” (One should know himself, acknowledging his strong points and weak points. He should try to strengthen his weak points or acknowledge his limitations.) “If a man knows himself and knows not his opponent, for every victory he will suffer a defeat.” “ If a man knows neither himself nor his opponent, he is a fool and will suffer defeat in every battle.”

**Commentary. As people stray from truth, eventually they stray from God. Conversely, as people stray from God, eventually they stray from truth.**

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