

## *Revealing Truth*

FR. THOMAS M. SANTA, CSSR

**For there is nothing hidden that will not become visible, and nothing secret that will not be known and come to light (Luke 8:17).**

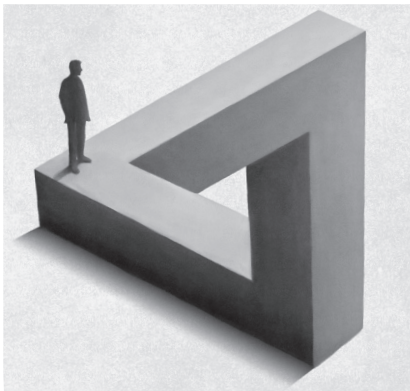
**T**he familiar gospel passage can be both comforting and challenging. Jesus reassures us that there is nothing hidden that will not be revealed. There is nothing that ultimately can be concealed. All will be brought into the light. This promise is intended to reassure us that there is no need to fear, but undoubtedly it may be more challenging than comforting for some people if they believe they have something they want to stay hidden and not be revealed. For others, it is comforting to hear the Lord's promise that there is no need to fear; that he will stand by us and support us. There is also another consideration: how do we live in a world where there are ultimately no secrets?

For a Christian, a person of faith, the only way to live and prosper in a world where there are no secrets is to live a life of transparency—a life where the truth is always the defining moment. Such a life reflects another teaching of the Lord, when he tells us, "Let your 'yes' mean 'yes,' and your 'no' mean 'no'" (Matthew 5:37). A transparent life is a life lived so profoundly that people will exclaim, not unlike the Lord when he first was introduced to

Nathanael, "There is no duplicity in him" (John 1:47). It is a life in which the famous question of Pontius Pilate—who, at the moment of Jesus' passion and impending death, wonders, "What is truth?" (John 18:38)—could never be asked.

But how do we find truth in the world in which we live? How do we discover transparency and believe that what we encounter is ultimately life-giving? Do we turn, for example, to a popular news network that promises us simply, "We report, you decide"? Do we turn to a trial witness on the stand and listen to their every word, reassured that he or she is telling us the "truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help me God"?

When we seek the truth, we need to recognize that there are times when we will be deliberately misled, when a specific moment or experience will not be what it seems to be. Most assuredly, this is partially due to the fact that there are people, organizations, and institutions—some even with great authority in our lives—who routinely practice deception and who seem not to be convinced of the necessity of the truth. Still other experiences in life are in and of themselves illusory, as



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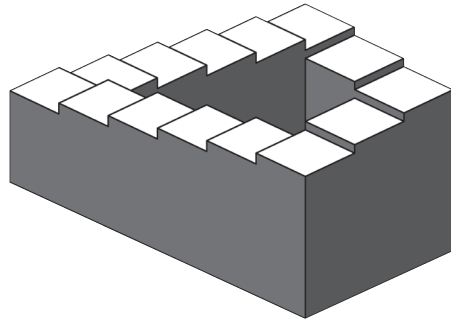
they lead us into believing that what we are hearing or experiencing is truthful, when, in fact, something is missing or has been deliberately glossed over.

For example, the sleight of hand of a magician is deliberately misleading. The trendiest marketing slogan trumpeting the guaranteed benefits of a new product may conveniently fail to mention the “fine print” details that are less than persuasive. The politicians and influencers of public opinion who fill our social media feeds call our attention to what supports their opinions or specific needs while ignoring points that might not be so favorable. The A-list movie stars make sure they are photographed only on their good side, and never when they are not properly coiffed and primed.

As we navigate the world in which we live, we learn that even though we desire to be people of truth, and even though we treasure the honest word and helpful answers to specific questions, we must nevertheless be on our guard and develop a healthy sense of doubt and critical thinking. To be people who live the truth and desire to mirror the kingdom of God in our daily choices and actions does not mean that we are necessarily easily fooled or misled. We may choose to presume good intentions and be willing to give a person the benefit of the doubt, but we also want to see results and to experience our trust being returned.

Jesus teaches us that he is “the way and the truth and the life” (John 14:6). In the Lord, there is only transparency. In the Lord, there is only truth. If we are confident in his promise, then all fear begins to leave us; anxiety is no longer part of our lives; and we can be comforted that all is in his hands. “Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven” (Matthew 6:10).

For a person who struggles with scrupulosity, the search for truth can be an all-consuming dedication: repeatedly looking for the answers, dissecting his or her doubt repeatedly, consulting one authority and then another authority. Unfortunately, all this



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can be an experience of grace for each of us.***

effort is not really a search for truth or, for that matter, even a search for clarity. It is, in fact, the disorder of scrupulosity, which masquerades as something good and useful when it is actually deception. The truth that will be revealed at the end of time will tell us that all this spent energy and emotion were in fact useless. It was all smoke and mirrors, a terrible and painful illusion, a trick in service of anxiety, not in service of truth.

The only truth that scrupulosity is capable of revealing is that everything it generates is a lie. Scrupulosity does not tell the truth. It is never the trustworthy answer. It pretends that your efforts are good and useful when, in fact, the disorder does nothing more than produce more and more anxiety, hopelessness, and isolation.

Thankfully, we do not need to wait until the end times to identify this authentic truth. The full extent of the damage and destruction of scrupulosity will be made known, but we already know what it is capable of and the distress that it brings. Exposing scrupulosity for what it really is can be an experience of grace for each of us. Rip off the masquerade and reveal that scrupulosity is not truthful; it releases darkness, not light.

This is the point to which all of us are led, including those who suffer with scrupulosity, if we seek the truth and believe that all will be revealed and nothing will be hidden. Ultimately, all illusions are taken away. Ultimately, only the truth remains. Remember: it is both comforting and challenging. ✨

# Moving Beyond Anger to Love

FR. RON ROLHEISER, OMI

**W**ith the current state of affairs, whether you're looking at politics or the churches, it's a challenge not to become pessimistic, angry, and bitter. But bitterness and anger, no matter how justified, are not good places to stay. Both Jesus and what's noble inside us invite us to move beyond anger and indignation.

At the truly bitter moments of our lives—when we're feeling overwhelmed by feelings of misunderstanding, slight, injustice, and rightful indignation, and we're staring across at those whom we deem responsible for the situation—anger and hatred will naturally arise within us. It's OK to dwell with them for a time, because anger is an important mode

of grieving. But, after some time, we need to move on. The challenge is to ask ourselves: *How do I love now, given all this hatred? What does love call me to now, in this bitter situation? Where can I now find a common thread that can keep me in family with those at whom I'm angry? How do I reach through the space that now leaves me separated by my own justified feelings of anger? And, perhaps most important of all: Where can I now find the strength to not give in to hatred and self-serving indignation?*

That's the ultimate moral challenge; the test that Jesus himself faced in Gethsemane. How do you love when everything around you invites you to the opposite? ✨

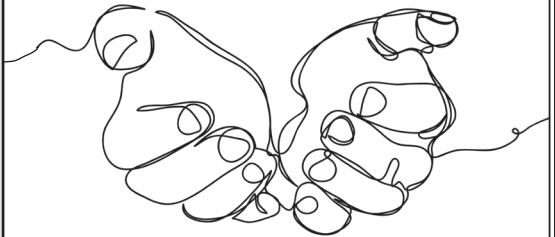
## PRAYER

Lord God, this Lent, wash away all my doubts about your love for me, for others, and for all your creation, that I may proclaim your goodness....

May I, with your help, come to see and love in others your own image and likeness, especially in those I find difficult.

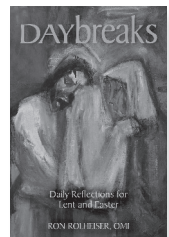
May my Lenten observance help me to enter into the dying and rising Jesus, that I may experience and share with others your joy, and that I may rejoice with a new song in my heart together with all your children.

Amen.



From *Daybreaks: Daily Reflections for Lent and Easter* by Ron Rolheiser, OMI (828201).

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# Mailbox

NEWSLETTER@LIGUORI.ORG

**Q.** *I took a vow to Jesus when I was young that I would never get married and that I would devote myself only to him. Now that I am older, I realize that is not what I need to do, but I am afraid to break my vow. What now?*

**A.** There is no vow to break because there was never a vow or a promise. It was a pious thought or exercise, but it had no binding force. For something to be a vow, it must be received and confirmed by the proper authority. This was not the situation, so you are free to proceed as you desire.

### **Additional Resources Online for Those Seeking Help**

Liguori Publications offers resources online that people with scrupulosity have found very helpful:

For helpful videos, please visit [YouTube/Catholic OCD](#).

For pastoral care and spiritual direction opportunities, please visit [managingscrupulosity.com](#).

For direct support and to access new helpful videos, please visit [Patreon.com/CatholicOCD](#). (Patreon offers a direct mail feature that can be used to answer your personal questions and concerns.)

**Q.** *Is it a sin to wear clothing that causes me to occasionally feel sexual? Tight spandex athletic wear sometimes causes me to think about sex because it makes me feel good.*

**A.** No, it is not a sin. That is not why you are wearing the clothing. We are sexual and physical beings, and all of us react in different ways, at different times, to our senses. That is the way we were created. It is not a sin to be a human being.



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