

## MEETING

# Daily Compass annual conference: Pilate asks, what is the Truth?

ECCLESIA

20\_10\_2023

**Patricia  
Gooding-  
Williams**



“The Truth” was the theme this year of the *Daily Compass* annual meeting at the Shalom Community Palazzolo sull'Oglio (BS) on 14 October. The title, *Quid est veritas?* (What is the Truth?) is a question Pilate asks Jesus during the dramatic interrogation which took

place between the two, moments before Pilate hands Jesus over to be crucified. According to John the Evangelist's gospel, Jesus met Pilate's question with silence. The meaning and significance of that silence formed the basis of the conference organised by the *Daily Compass*. As is customary, the day was divided in two parts: Holy Mass and a keynote lecture in the morning, followed by an afternoon session rich with the testimonies of contemporary Christians.

**This year, the gathering of over 500 people**, was blessed by the presence of Monsignor Giovanni D'Ercole, bishop emeritus of Ascoli Piceno, who celebrated Holy Mass; but it was also blessed by the gift of a precious relic (a lock of hair) of Blessed Carlo Acutis, loaned specially for the occasion. Riccardo Cascioli, the director explained, "the holy relic serves to teach is to love the Eucharist, source of grace and life, in the same way Carlo had during his short life".

**The keynote address on a Pilate's question, What is the truth?** was delivered by Monsignor Giovanni D'Ercole. That tormented question, he explained, has never stopped to resonate throughout the centuries. In fact, "Pilate has become an icon for those who ask questions and seek answers" to the Truth. Today, we witness our contemporaries wade through life burdened by the same troubled search for truth which Pilate experienced when he encountered Jesus, said Monsignor D'Ercole. For Pilate, there are many truths, but which ultimately leave him enslaved as is demonstrated in his attempt to cancel his guilt, by publicly washing his hands, thus symbolically but knowingly distancing himself from the murder of an innocent man under his jurisdiction. So too, Monsignor D'Ercole explained, mankind today, is enslaved, disoriented by the many false truths proposed in a secular world, dominated by "relativism and uncertainty", which deny the only Truth to be encountered in a person, God incarnate.

**Yet, this encounter, "is possible for everyone".** Monsignor D'Ercole adds, "This encounter allows us to know ourselves better too and always takes place in a community through dialogue and an emotional bond with the witnesses who have encountered the Truth which always has the beautiful face of Love. In this sense, therefore, Truth is an all-round encounter: with others, with oneself and with God. As Saint John writes in his first Letter: "What we have seen and heard, we also proclaim to you, because you too be in communion with us. And our communion is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ. We write these things to you so that our joy may be full." (Jn1,3)."

**But, Saint John also reveals that Jesus does not answer Pilate's question.**

Instead, He remains in silence. Nonetheless, Monsignor D'Ercole affirms, that “silence speaks as Pilate understands well”. “The contemplation of Jesus' silence to Pilate's question permits us to become disciples of a human/divine Person: Christ. His silence provokes and strips away any pretence of control; our silence is transformed into revolutionary adoration and his silence is prolonged in the silent presence in the Eucharist where the silence of the Host is the answer to the deepest questions of the human soul.” “The Risen One”, concludes Monsignor D'Ercole, “wants to reach all humanity”. So, it must be admitted that, today more than ever, the recognition of truth, (...) is linked to the credibility of the testimony of Christians (what a responsibility!) and to the freedom with which each person is willing to accept Him”.

**Credible testimonies today, was the focus of the three-part afternoon session.**

The first bearer of truth to take the speaker's chair was Adam Smith-Connor, a British army veteran who will stand trial on 16 November for praying in silence near an abortion clinic in Bournemouth. He recounted that he was 27 and an atheist, when he paid for his son (later named Jacob) to be killed in an abortion. Incredibly, that death became the possibility of a new life for him when he met followers of the Evangelical Church, he told the audience. Meeting these Christians, he continued, led to his search for truth, a new and very painful understanding of his past and to his conversion to Christianity ([read his story here](#)). His encounter with the Catholic Church came later when he decided to join *40 days for life*, an organisation that supports women seeking an abortion. Through the testimonies of the numerous Catholics involved, Adam converted to Catholicism. He described the “liberating experience of forgiveness through confession” and his “baptism in to the Catholic Church last Easter”. Today he considers it is his duty to defend the sanctity of life and the right to fundamental freedoms which he fought to defend in Afghanistan together with two friends who lost their lives.

**Understanding and knowing where our secular world is heading,** was the basis of the second testimony. Economist Maurizio Milano, unpacked and unmasked the false truths and promises of the Great Reset, theorised by Klaus Schwab, coordinator of the World Economic Forum of Davos. The idea to rethink the world's economy through an ecological and digital transformation, Mr Milano explained, in reality is a plan for a select elite to exercise total control over the population. These policies being enforced by the Davos Forum, are anti-Christian, promise a false salvation without Christ and an order that goes against the natural order of creation and mankind contrary to God and His plans for mankind, he said.

**In the same vein, the third testimony, put the record straight on the vicious media campaign,**

which used fake news to slander the Shalom Community, hosting the conference. Cardiologist and surgeon Doctor Carlo Fucci, whose son had put his hope in the false hope which drug addiction promised, only found his redemption at the Shalom community. He testified how easy it is today to fall into the trap of false truths. Yet, with that “all-round encounter: with others, with oneself and with God”, which his son experienced at Shalom, it is possible to heal and rise again. Luca, his son, is now happily married, a father and runs his own business, he said.

**Today more than ever, that restless search for the Truth,** that marks every generation, finds its answer in silence, emphasised Monsignor D’Ercole. Pilate has the merit of having immortalised the question, what is the truth? But, as Monsignor D’Ercole explained, we are invited not to follow his example. He is the man who poses questions which remain unanswered, who becomes sad and alone with his conscience. Instead, Christ can be encountered today, as the testimonies at the conference confirmed. Because by “contemplating Christ’s silence before Pilate, we find the same silent presence in the Eucharist where the silence of the Host is the answer to the deepest questions of the human soul”, Monsignor D’Ercole said.