

Diary Fragments

MERCY, JUSTICE, AND TRUTH. These are like the three marriageable daughters of a very great King. Now imagine to yourself, if you will, the soul of a noble, high-born suitor who, having heard tales of this King's daughters and their great beauty, has journeyed to this kingdom seeking the hand of a princess. The King greets this noble visitor most graciously and, after a time, understanding the purpose of this visitation, calls for the presence of his youngest daughter, Mercy. She is the freest, fairest and most beautiful young noblewoman the suitor has ever seen and from the moment his eyes behold her he falls in love. It seems to him that the King too looked upon his youngest daughter clearly as a favorite. And the suitor's heart begins to rejoice at his good fortune, for the King seems kindly disposed to him and to delight in his delight.

Then the King dismisses her and calls for his eldest daughter, Justice, whose beauty can only be said to be awesome. The moment she appears this suitor felt his heart skip and his breath grow short. The King himself regards this eldest daughter with a deep love even bordering on reverence, but this suitor, for all the daughter's beauty, feels his ardor cooling in her presence. Perhaps he senses that daughter Justice has eyes only for her Sire, for after her initial glance, though she is quite polite and correct, she pays him scant attention.

Finally, the King dismisses her as well and sends for his middle daughter, Truth. This daughter also stays very close to her father although she is clearly more friendly. Her beauty is very great indeed but seems somehow illusive, as if, depending on the angle of the eye, or perhaps just the play of light, daughter Truth sometimes resembles the warm and inviting beauty of younger sister Mercy, and at other times the seemingly unapproachable beauty of elder sister Justice. It leaves the suitor confused. Then when suddenly Truth turns to him and asks if he is worthy of a King's daughter, his confusion and embarrassment is total.

Now the King, being shrewd as well as kind and generous, decides to test the suitor's intentions (and his worth as well) and offers him the hand of Truth as bride. It is at this point that the suitor's fate is decided. If he accepts the hand of Truth in good spirit, the King will be pleased, and relenting, will give him the longed-for daughter, Mercy, with Truth and Justice as contended handmaidens. But if perchance he resists Truth and in the end turns his back on her, the King will give him Justice, with Truth alone as handmaiden. Thus, having turned from Truth, the suitor would find himself deprived of Mercy forever. May he nor any of us ever suffer such a fate!



Some thoughts about truth, personal and transcendent

Outside of the special friends that God has succeeded in drawing to Himself for company, a company above all of the truthful, who can be said to love the bright light of truth, particularly when it becomes personal. Deep personal truth is like nakedness, and we much prefer our clothing, thank you. Indeed, we spend untold effort, do we not, consciously or otherwise going over this or that detail of our *persona* to ensure our cover is intact. Nothing untoward must ever peek through, not even to ourselves if we can help it. When something untoward does slip through, the white lie is our instinctive first line of defense, but if that line wavers, often as not reinforcements of a darker more deliberate hue are at the ready. Some step into these shadows more reluctantly than others, but who does not have recourse to the big lie when the moment calls for it. Some more than others, indeed, but face it, the men or women who are in love with truth, who will bleed for it, are as rare as the proverbial rose in a snow bank. These are God's truthful ones, those who have come to trust, often the hard way, that Truth is their friend.



Let no one doubt that God is a God of justice as well as of mercy, which is to say He is a God of Truth as well as of Mercy and Love. It is wrong to think that God will satisfy his mercy without at the same time obliging his justice. Can God contradict Himself in his dealing with us? We may hope forlornly that just some such thing is possible, that He will be nice enough to relax justice in our case and overlook a great many things. That's the modern way of thinking about God, is it not? As some kind of cosmic, friendly neighbor who thoughtfully averts his eyes from anything that might embarrass us were it known. But God, the Church would have us understand, is not that way. He misses nothing. It is a great mistake to think that God exercises Mercy at the expense of Truth and Justice, like a doting mother whose son can do no wrong. We are taught this by the Cross—a flat-out contradiction against any such hope. How else are we to understand the Cross and its mysterious logic if not simultaneously as a supreme act of Justice no less than as the most supreme act of Mercy conceivable. Think about this. God's Mercy called forth the Cross, indeed it is so. But is it any less true to say that God's Justice demanded the Cross? Indeed, can the magnitude of his Mercy ever be fathomed apart from the magnitude of the Justice the Cross went to satisfy? A little reflection tells us Justice and Mercy are inseparable in the Cross. The Cross is a sign of the length to which God has gone that *both* his Justice and his Mercy may be satisfied, *on our behalf!* What makes the Justice and Mercy of the Cross *our* justice and mercy is our truthfulness. Without deep personal truthfulness on our part what real bearing does the Cross have in our lives?

--diarist