

“Truth, what is that?” Jn. 18: 38 Pontius Pilate asked as Jesus stood on trial before him.

As the Leveson Inquiry into the press is revealing, you certainly can't rely on things written in some newspapers as the truth.

Unlike the Gospels, where every page is diffused with eternal truth.

And this is certainly so with Jesus curing Peter's mother-in-law of her fever in Mark's Gospel, because this healing shows us the truth about Jesus.

He who helps us up when we're at our lowest, to calm us, and heal us.

It's not easy being a Christian whoever and whatever you are; but it brings joy, depth and a certainty to life – and death – that nothing else comes close to.

The reason it's not easy to follow Jesus is because, as Mark highlights in his Gospel, the world is a place where Satan and his forces of evil are, as the Psalm writer says: “Like lions [that] open their jaws, roaring and tearing into their prey.”

Ps. 22: 13

And Jesus, and the forces of Evil, are implacably opposed to each other.

Satan, being set on our eternal destruction out of hatred for us having been created in the image and likeness of the God he hates.

God, being set on our eternal salvation for the very reason that He created us in the image and likeness of His Beloved Son.

But it's not an evenly matched contest, thanks to Jesus; who, as the Blessed John Henry Newman, wrote in his work, *The Dream Of Gerontius*, set to music by Sir Edward Elgar: “A second Adam to the fight, and to the rescue came.”

One palpable sign of this Evil at work is to be found in illness, and suffering, and death; but it isn't inflicted on us by God.

And, although Job on his bed of pain cries: “Lying in bed, I think, ‘When will it be morning?’ But the night drags on, and I toss around till dawn.” Job. 7: 3 – 4 he never doubts God's goodness.

Jesus has no trace or shred of evil in Him: the healing of Peter's mother-in-law, the other healings, and expulsions of evil spirits from people, demonstrates that.

And Satan knows that Jesus has no evil in Him because he knows Jesus is the Holy One of God.

He also knows that Jesus has come to destroy him, but he doesn't know how.

However, he's going to fight Jesus every step of the way.

Evil is tenacious, and can only be dealt with in a bitter struggle; but we mustn't engage in this war relying on our own strength.

We must be shielded by the: “The precious blood of Christ, the sinless, spotless Lamb of God.” 1 Peter 1: 18

Only He has the power, and authority to defeat Satan, and all his works.

That's why, when Jesus casts out evil spirits, they come out of people fighting, and screaming for their lives.

But who could possibly think that Evil could be destroyed by Jesus being destroyed by it?

But this is what happened on the Cross, isn't it?

Jesus, when He died uttered a loud cry, and said: "It is finished," and gave up His spirit and died." Jn. 19: 30

It was a battle to the bitter end against the Evil One: yet it wasn't the end
We know the truth about the real ending.

We've read the truth on the last page: we've read beyond the Crucifixion to the Resurrection.

Satan, when he got Jesus to the Cross, believed that he'd destroyed Him.

All that talk by Jesus of conquering evil had been just talk. There was Evil conquering Him.

But, as Scripture says: "No eye has seen, no ear has heard, and no mind has imagined what God has prepared for those who love him." 1 Cor. 2: 9 (Is. 64: 4)

Satan couldn't conceive of the notion that Jesus would plumb the depths of love to save us – even unto death

Out of that death came the destruction of the power of Satan, and the gift of eternal life prepared for us by the Lord.

At the end of today's Gospel Jesus refuses to let the demons say who he really is: but why did he do that? Because they didn't really know Him.

They knew He was their destroyer, but that's all.

They didn't know how He would eventually overpower them.

They didn't have the capacity to understand that Jesus was God's love in the flesh because they had no love in them – only hate.

So their testimony to Him was inadequate, incomplete, and misleading.

It wasn't the truth: but we testify to the truth of Christ crucified.

Yet, as Paul tells us: "I know very well how foolish the message of the cross sounds to those who are on the road to destruction. But we who are being saved recognise this message as the very power of God." 1 Cor. 1: 18

We know that: "Death is swallowed up in victory."

1 Cor. 15: 54 (Isa 25:8) because: "Christ lives in us. [And we] live by faith in the Son of God, who loved us and gave himself for us." Gal. 2: 20
