



**Five Important Spiritual Thoughts from the Liturgy of the Word
...and follow up for the Secular Franciscan
December 29 – January 4**

1 -- "Lord, now let your servant go in peace." (Lk 2:29)
...As I study my own death, am I truly ready to meet the Lord?

2 – "I write to you not because you do not know the truth, but because you do, and because every lie is alien to the truth." (1 Jn 2:21)

THE LIE AND THE TRUTH

**"You belong to your father the devil and you willingly carry out your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning and does not stand in truth, because there is no truth in him. When he tells a lie, he speaks in character, because he is a liar and the father of lies."
(John 8:44)**

It is a challenge to try to get into the mind of the human Jesus as he spoke to the religious leaders of his time. These were the people who accepted the office to be the people who would direct their fellow Israelites toward a better understanding of the law of Moses. And in Jesus's mind, they were not doing a very good job.

It is a challenge because Jesus spoke often of "love" to be the fundamental guide to behavior as he established his kingdom here on earth. And yet he was almost "mean" to the religious leaders. He spoke harsh words, calling them "devils" and telling them directly that there was no "truth" in them, that their "character" was that of a liar.

Of course, the explanation of this is part of the understanding of "tough love" as the modern world has called it. "Tough love" are words that sound like words of hatred, but really are nothing more than the truth. And sometimes that truth must be spoken in a harsh way.

It is extremely difficult for adults to be the recipients of "tough love" from another. Generally, we simply will not want to hear it, and therefore we will ignore it.

A classic case for modern man or woman is the horrible addiction of alcoholism or dependence on illegal drugs. Unfortunately, there are many who find their death early on because of the addiction. But sometimes there is a conversion.



The man was a very talented pilot for a large airline in our world. But he had given into the addiction that alcohol can have on a human being. He even performed his task as captain of a plane in the state of intoxication. It was in such a situation that he was finally discovered. The plane had crashed with a hundred people on board, but not because of him. In fact, he was such a talented pilot that he saved the majority of the people, losing only a handful.

But as the official agency investigated the accident, they found that he was actually intoxicated. He tried to lie his way out of it, but in the end, he finally saw what his lies were doing to him. His speech in prison concerning his alcoholism is a classic statement that should be studied by all of us as we look at our understanding of the truth and how we share it.

"It was as if I had reached my life-long limit of lies," he told his inmates, "I could not tell one more lie. At least, [now] I'm sober. I thank God for that, I'm grateful for that. For the first time in my life, I'm free." (Movie, "Flight")

True conversion is never easy. It never was; it never will be.

3 – [Jesus] came to what was his own, but his own people did not accept him. (Jn 1:11)

...Have I completely accepted what Jesus has said?

4 – "There is one among you whom you do not recognize." (Jn 1:26)

...Do I recognize that the Lord is present in my every situation?

5 -- He said to them, "Come, and you will see." (Jn 1:39)

...Am I showing by my life that I have come and actually seen the Lord?