

Thoughts on the Daily Word

17th Week of Year. Saturday 1st August. Readings: Jeremiah 26:11-16,24; Psalm 68; Gospel: Matthew 14:1-12.

Speaking truth to power is a much-used expression today. It is also one of the most difficult things to do, which is why it doesn't happen that often. It can also be very dangerous. Jeremiah does this today in his confrontation with the Temple authorities and the ruling elite. He escapes death today because he would appear to have the people on his side but also a named, powerful figure. Politics is going on here obviously. John the Baptist has the people but clearly no powerful support to protect him. Truth to power can be a dangerous balance depending on the power of truth. Pope Francis faced criticism for apparently not challenging Chinese persecution of the Muslim Uighurs, but the same people tended to ignore him when he spoke on behalf of the unborn or against assisted suicide. Those for and against the BLM have people on the edges who would silence all criticism and are willing to use violence in their cause. Herod says to Jesus, 'truth, what is that?'. Just what is truth? Is it an exercise in power? These are questions we all have to face as we search for the sure ground to stand on. Our faith gives us precisely that ground because it rests on a God who respects all of humanity, sinners as well as sinned against. We call it mercy; it must stand alongside truth.