



WHO NEEDS TRUTH?

2013 marked the launch of our biennial poster competition with themes revolving around essential moral and existential problems. The project began with reflections upon the Decalogue as the cornerstone of Western civilization. This time round, we wish to invite artists to consider the notion of truth – its cognitive and ethical aspects, and its popular understanding. We hope that our new theme will inspire our entrants to intriguing and individualized artistic statements.

Truth is one of the elementary ideas permeating our daily reflections upon the human condition. Without it, no culture or civilization would ever be able to function, and no concept or judgment would ever be formed. The quest for truth provides a basis for metaphysical thought, scientific knowledge, and the every-day life of each and every one of us. It makes us search for, define, and also question our cognitive abilities. Fascinating and engaging as it is, truth may also be challenging and difficult, and therefore, we often avoid, manipulate or obfuscate the truth so that it fits in with our subjective expectations.

Thus, convinced of the inalienability of truth in human thought, we strive to come to its defence and to defy the dominant relativistic trends towards its suppression. We hope that our competition will show that truth is far from outworn or passé, and that there is always the need to ask fundamental questions, such as: Who are we, and where do we come from? What is the world? Does God exist? Are thinking processes and knowledge acquisition possible without the notion of truth? We also ask a number of questions about righteousness and truth in ethics: Is telling the truth worth anybody's while and why? What are the sources of truth and how to accept it in one's life? What benefits are drawn from concealing or denying the truth, from telling half-truths or resorting to relativism – all for the sake of one's own comfort, interest or fear?

In the realm of values, many of us turn to the Eighth Commandment: „Thou shall not bear false witness against thy neighbour” and the Bible. But truth is equally important for every person, regardless of their world view and cultural heritage.

Here is our selection – drawn from multitudinous sources – of adages, aphorisms, famous quotations as well as popular proverbs and old sayings. Perhaps they will prove useful for a better understanding of the organizers' intentions and for individual reflections on truth.

Here is our choice of fundamental questions:

„Pilate said to Him, «What is truth?»” (Jn. 18: 38)

„Where do we come from? What do we do? Where do we go from here?” (H. Bergson)

„Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free”. (Jn. 8: 32)

„Nature itself has equipped man with the ability to search for truth”. (Aristotle)

„People would not be able to live together, if they had no trust in each other, i.e. if they didn't impart truth to each other”. (Thomas Aquinas)

„Write the truth, as if you were carving it on a gravestone... for truth is eternal!” (C. K. Norwid)

„To find meaning in life is the most powerful motivation for human beings”. (V. Frankl)

„Despite all the criticism of truth and attempts to undermine its meaning, the thirst for truth is still unquenchable today. And even though we can only get shreds of truth, to stop searching for it would mean an inevitable end to human thought and complete degradation of culture”. (B. Skarga)

„Questioning is the piety of thinking”. (M. Heidegger)

„If there is no God then everything is permitted”. (F. Dostoevsky)
 „Playing with the truth is invariably tantamount to playing with life”. (F. Kafka)
 „Being a wise man takes more than just knowledge”. (L. Wittgenstein)
 „Through error you come to the truth”. (F. Dostoevsky)
 „Man has been made to search for truth, and not to possess it”. (B. Pascal)
 „Faith and reason (Fides et ratio) are like two wings on which the human spirit rises to the contemplation of truth”. (John Paul II)
 „Don't ask «whence» and «whither». Such questions are not to be put to yourself or the world (...) The universe not only reaches us through its vastness and its laws, but it also speaks to us through the vicissitudes of our lives”. (M. Heller)
 „So he's got to have happiness,/ he's got to have truth, too,/he's got to have eternity/ did you ever! (...) Poor little beggar./ A human, if we ever saw one”. (W. Szyborska)
 „Is truth dead? Let's not be hasty with such a verdict. We have seen so many aspects of our civilization condemned to death and even guillotined, and yet they're back, alive and kicking”. (L. Kořakowski)

Finally, a selection of quotes dealing with the ethical aspect of truth:

„All you need to say is simply «Yes» or «No»”. (Mt 5: 37)
 „First take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye”. (Mt 7:5)
 „The false can never grow into truth by growing in power”. (R. Tagore)
 „Better a bitter truth than a sweet lie”. (Swahili proverb)
 „A half-truth is a whole lie”. (E. M. Forster)
 „It takes a great many words to not tell the truth”. (A. Kamieńska)
 „The truth has but one face, a lie has many faces”. (Montesquieu)
 „When you shoot an arrow of truth, dip its end in honey”. (Arab proverb)
 „Truth travels without visa”. (F. Joliot-Curie)
 „A new lie is more palatable than an old truth”. (A. Chekhov)
 „You know how to tell the truth? You also need to learn to listen to it”. (J. I. Kraszewski)
 „Friends are won through flattery, the truth gives birth to hate”. (Terence)
 „Truth is hardest to find when anything could be the truth”. (S. J. Lec)
 „Thanks to (...) mass culture, folly and wisdom have equal rights”. (M.W. Grabski)
 „Look truth right in the eye”.
 „Nothing hurts like the truth”.
 „A lie has no legs”.
 „Truth will out”.
 „Beat about the bush”.
 „Gold kills truth and virtue”.
 „Children, drunken men and fools tell the truth”.
 „Peaks of folly are scaled effortlessly”. (K. Chyła)
 „If anyone takes away Kali's cow, then that's a wicked deed. If Kali takes away the cow of somebody else, that is a good deed”. (H. Sienkiewicz)

It is important to stress at this point that the above selection is random, subjective, and far from representative. Artists are free use the above quotations, provide their own choice of text, or not use the written word in their projects.