

Reflection Monday Week 12 – St John Fisher and St Thomas More – 2020

Deception. The dictionary states that **Deception** is an act or statement which misleads, hides the truth, or promotes a belief, concept, or idea that is not true. It is often done for personal gain or advantage. It can involve dissimulation, propaganda, and sleight of hand, as well as distraction, camouflage, or concealment. Phew! At first glance, it certainly demands a lot of effort!!!! On the positive side. Deception is used by magicians for their tricks to create a sense of wonder. On the down side, it is part of the human condition, and we find it too natural to deceive. Deception has become part of the dialogue around the pandemic and the ensuing blame game - just like Adam in the garden. Fortunately, we have two great stalwarts in St John Fisher and St Thomas More, who, like Eleazar, were not going to hide or deceive themselves about their true position and their faith in God even though it meant losing their lives. Deception, however, is most often used by us against ourselves. We argue that we cannot do certain things because we say to ourselves that we are not able, do not have the ability, are afraid of failure etc. etc. When we do not know this until we try. Although the media is good at challenging injustices, all too often it champions deceit in order to create news rather than report the full truth. After all, it spawned fake news, which has been with us since time immemorial. How often has history needed to be rewritten because the truth had been hidden or ignored? But before casting judgement on others, remember the old wise maxim. *We only see the deception in others because of the deception within ourselves.* But before we become paranoid, let us remember that we have the Holy Spirit to guide us and Jesus to inspire us. Let us work harder to be truthful and honest and help create a culture in which deception is unable to find a welcome.

"The devil's finest trick is to persuade you that he does not exist." — **Charles Baudelaire**

Pope Francis speaks of himself: *"I am a sinner. This is the most accurate description. It is not a definition, a literary genre. I am a sinner."*

St Thomas More: *"I die the king's faithful servant, but God's first."* [On ascending the platform to his execution] *I pray you, I pray you, Mr Lieutenant, see me safe up and, for my coming down, I can shift for myself. "[how can anyone] be silly enough to think himself better than other people, because his clothes are made of finer woollen thread than theirs. After all, those fine clothes were once worn by a sheep, and they never turned it into anything better than a sheep."* *"Nor can they understand why a totally useless substance like gold should now, all over the world, be considered far more important than human beings, who gave it such value as it has, purely for their own convenience."*

And one for the road . . .

Alfie was listening to his sister practice her singing. "Sis," he said, "I wish you'd sing Christmas carols." "That's very nice of you, Alfie," she replied, "but why?"

Alfie replied, "Because then I'd only have to hear you sing once a year!"