

## Ten After Ten Session 118: The Eighth Commandment

“You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.”

2464 The eighth commandment forbids misrepresenting the truth in our relations with others. This moral prescription flows from the vocation of the holy people to bear witness to their God who is the truth and wills the truth. Offenses against the truth express by word or deed a refusal to commit oneself to moral uprightness.

2465 The Old Testament attests that God is the source of all truth. His Word is truth. His Law is truth. His “faithfulness endures to all generations.” Since God is “true,” the members of his people are called to live in the truth.

2466 To follow Jesus is to live in “the Spirit of truth,” whom the Father sends in his name and who leads “into all the truth.” To his disciples Jesus teaches the unconditional love of truth: “Let what you say be simply ‘Yes or No.’”

2467 It is in accordance with their dignity that all men, because they are persons... are both impelled by their nature and bound by a moral obligation to seek the truth, especially religious truth. They are also bound to adhere to the truth once they come to know it and direct their whole lives in accordance with the demands of truth.

2468 Truth as uprightness in human action and speech is called truthfulness, sincerity, or candor. Truth or truthfulness is the virtue which consists in showing oneself true in deeds and truthful in words, and in guarding against duplicity, dissimulation, and hypocrisy.

2469 The virtue of truth gives another his just due. Truthfulness keeps to the just mean between what ought to be expressed and what ought to be kept secret: it entails honesty and discretion. In justice, as a matter of honor, one man owes it to another to manifest the truth.

2470 The disciple of Christ consents to...the simplicity of a life in conformity with the Lord’s example, abiding in his truth.

2471 The Christian is not to be ashamed of testifying to our Lord. In situations that require witness to the faith, the Christian must profess it without equivocation, after the example of St. Paul before his judges.

2472 The duty of Christians to take part in the life of the Church impels them to act as witnesses of the Gospel and of the obligations that flow from it. This witness is a transmission of the faith in words and deeds. Witness is an act of justice that establishes the truth or makes it known.

2473 Martyrdom is the supreme witness given to the truth of the faith: it means bearing witness even unto death. The martyr bears witness to Christ who died and rose, to whom he is united by charity. He bears witness to the truth of the faith and of Christian doctrine.

2474 The Church has painstakingly collected the records of those who persevered to the end in witnessing to their faith. These are the acts of the Martyrs. They form the archives of truth written in letters of blood.

2475 Christ's disciples...by putting away falsehood, are to "put away all malice and all guile and insincerity and envy and all slander."

2476 When it is made publicly, a statement contrary to the truth takes on a particular gravity. In court it becomes false witness. When it is under oath, it is perjury. Acts such as these contribute to condemnation of the innocent, exoneration of the guilty, or the increased punishment of the accused. They gravely compromise the exercise of justice and the fairness of judicial decisions.

2477 Respect for the reputation of persons forbids every attitude and word likely to cause them unjust injury. He becomes guilty:

—of rash judgment who, even tacitly, assumes as true, without sufficient foundation, the moral fault of a neighbor; of detraction who, without objectively valid reason, discloses another's faults and failings to persons who did not know them; of calumny who, by remarks contrary to the truth, harms the reputation of others and gives occasion for false judgments concerning them.

2478 To avoid rash judgment, everyone should be careful to interpret insofar as possible his neighbor's thoughts, words, and deeds in a favorable way:

2479 Honor is the social witness given to human dignity, and everyone enjoys a natural right to the honor of his name and reputation and to respect. Thus, detraction and calumny offend against the virtues of justice and charity.

2480 Every word or attitude is forbidden which by flattery, adulation, or complaisance encourages and confirms another in malicious acts and perverse conduct. Adulation is a grave fault if it makes one an accomplice in another's vices or grave sins.

2481 Boasting or bragging is an offense against truth. So is irony aimed at disparaging someone by maliciously caricaturing some aspect of his behavior.

2482 "A lie consists in speaking a falsehood with the intention of deceiving." The Lord denounces lying as the work of the devil.

2483 Lying is the most direct offense against the truth...By injuring man's relation to truth and to his neighbor, a lie offends against the fundamental relation of man and of his word to the Lord.

2484 The gravity of a lie is measured against the nature of the truth it deforms, the circumstances, the intentions of the one who lies, and the harm suffered by its victims. To lie is to speak or act against the truth in order to lead someone into error.

2485 The deliberate intention of leading a neighbor into error by saying things contrary to the truth constitutes a failure in justice and charity. The culpability is greater when the intention of deceiving entails the risk of deadly consequences for those who are led astray.

2486 Lying is destructive of society; it undermines trust among men and tears apart the fabric of social relationships.