

one

We continue today to meditate on the teaching of Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount where Jesus reminds us of the 8th Commandment: "You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor." Then He goes on to warn us against the sin of lying when he states: All you need say is "Yes" if you mean yes, "No" if you mean no; anything more than this comes from the evil one.

Jesus is teaching us to have a radical commitment to the truth.

Truth is the conformity of our thinking and behavior to reality.

Jesus wants us to live according to reality and not some false narrative because God is the ultimate reality and we reach him by living in truth, that is conforming ourselves to reality.

two

CCC 2483 To lie is to speak or act against the truth to lead into error someone who has the right to know the truth.

We are untruthful, and for really stupid reasons.

We lie to avoid taking responsibility for things. We lie to get out of embarrassing situations. We lie to make ourselves look good. We exaggerate or embellish the truth to make ourselves look more clever or intelligent.

For example, I have noticed how when I relate a quarrel or a disagreement I've had with someone else, I always tell it in such a way to put myself in the best light rather than just laying out the facts which in reality, we were both partly right and partly wrong.

We skew reality to make ourselves look better all the time. It's lying and for a really bad reason.

three

It is a lie to speak or act against the truth and lead someone into error.

The biggest problem is that we lie to ourselves.

We tell ourselves stories that are not true, they are not reality. Those false narratives mislead us to justify some sinful or self-destructive behavior.

What are the lies we tell ourselves?

I can't be happy with this spouse. I could be happy if they would change or if I were married to someone else.

I need this or that to be happy.

I am worthless or unlovable.

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My situation is hopeless. There is nothing I can do.

If I do this or that, everyone will think this of me.

None of these are true. They are lies that lead us to sinful or destructive behaviors.

Take the last one, “If I do this or that, everyone will think less of me.” That is not true, It is not reality. The reality is that everyone is so caught up in what they are thinking and doing that they don’t care. They are not thinking about you. So why be paralyzed by an unreality, a non-truth.

four

We tell ourselves lies, false narratives that fit our vices to justify them.

St. Thomas Aquinas says we can’t do anything evil without first creating a rationalization for it, some false story to justify it.

We create lies to justify our pride, vanity, anger, sloth, greed, gluttony, lust, complaining, gossiping etc.

For example, “I need to buy another house for the winter to be happy.” Or “I am worried I will outlive my money and there will be no one to take care of me.” These are not true. No one needs a second house to be happy and God will always be there to provide for you. But we tell these lies to justify greed and not being generous.

I’m not picking on the wealthy. We all have our vices that are justified by some lie, some false story we tell ourselves.

Examine yourself. What are your dominant vices and what false narratives, what lies have you been telling yourself to justify them?

five

We are tempted to lie because we are afraid to embrace reality, which is the truth.

We can overcome this temptation by a radical commitment to know the truth and live in the truth, to know and live in reality.

We can fight the lies by turning to the Lord and say:

“Jesus, I feel so tempted to pride or lust (insert whatever vice you are struggling with) or I am so overwhelmed with this feeling, please help me.”

Then thank God for your reality instead of wishing things were some other way.

Say to Jesus, “Lord, I thank you for my spouse. They are so wonderful for these reasons.”

Or “Jesus, thank you for making me the way I am. I know I am of infinite worth in your eyes.”

Truth, which means living in reality, will set you free!