



Sovereign Order of Saint John of Jerusalem ©  
\* Knights of Malta \*

November  
2018

## Chancellor's Update

### Kavanaugh and the Forgotten Commandment

#### The Liar

No character is more despised in life than a liar. We expect honesty and sincerity and truthfulness from those with whom we come in contact. In other words the basis of business and the basis of friendship is truth. God has given men the power to speak and to convey to others the thoughts that are in their minds. *The power of speech must be used always in the service of the truth.*

#### The Lie

A lie is telling or indicating, by the written or spoken word, what is known to be untrue in order to deceive the listener or the reader. The contents and meaning of our words should correspond to the contents and meaning of our minds. Only then are we telling the truth.

Certain expressions are used in the social and business world that cannot be classified as lies, since there is no intent to deceive and since everyone understands the way in which they are used. Thus, to say "I cannot go tomorrow," when one is invited where one does not wish to go, is not a lie. One of its accepted meanings is "I do not wish to go tomorrow."

A lie is wrong in itself and never permitted even if it is followed by some good result. The Catholic Church ever preaches the fundamental ethical doctrine that *the end does not justify the means.*

#### What We Must Do

In addition to telling the truth the Eighth Commandment requires us to protect the reputation of our neighbor. *One of our most precious gifts in life is our honor and our reputation.* Everyone is entitled to his reputation until by his own fault and through his own revelation he has ruined that reputation.

The world is very cruel to those who have lost their reputation. Ex-convicts have a hard time finding employment. Public sinners find little forgiveness on the part of those who applauded them in the midst of their sins. The pagan world in which we live is a hypocritical as well as a cruel world. We should, therefore, be most careful to preserve our own reputation and the reputation of others.

#### What We Must Not Do

The very wording of the Eighth Commandment reveals that we must not "bear false witness" against our neighbor at any time. We should not be guilty of this in a courtroom or at home, or at business, or among our associates.

#### Rash Judgment

We must not think evil of people rashly, that is, without sufficient grounds. Rash judgments result in rash words and rash words destroy reputations. We must not rush to conclusions about people. We must not immediately think that a man is intoxicated because he stumbles. We

should await more evidence. We should not give too much weight to rumors or idle gossip. These are a fruitful source of developing rash and sinful judgments.

### Slander

We should never be guilty of telling lies about our neighbor. Fewer sins are worse. To tell a lie about our neighbor when he is absent and has no chance to defend himself or to explain circumstances is a hateful sin, far more hateful than many other sins committed in life. Written lies are known as libel.

### Detraction

*Even when we know that our neighbor has been guilty of some wrongdoing, we should not publish it or disclose it for the sake of conversation.* To do so is to commit the sin of Detraction. Our neighbor is always entitled to his reputation until he himself has destroyed it. Back-biting is this habit of speaking unkindly about a person's faults behind his back.

*This does not mean that we must not report serious wrongdoing to those in authority,* in order that the offender may be corrected and in order that others may be protected from his offenses. It is not a sin against the Eighth Commandment to complain to the authorities against a thief. It is right for a parent to warn a daughter against a vicious individual who seeks the daughter's friendship. Many times it is necessary and obligatory to disclose the faults of others to those in authority.

Beyond these occasions no one should manufacture faults about his neighbor and no one should publicize the faults of his neighbor. Instead, we should pray for the offender and try by fraternal correction to win him from his wicked ways. That is the charitable thing to do.

### Reparation

Just as restitution must be made by those who steal, so reparation must be made by those who lie about their neighbor or commit the sin of Detraction. No matter how embarrassed we may be, we must restore our neighbor's reputation in the mind of the one to whom we have spoken the lie. Where, unfortunately, we have disclosed faults that really exist, we must seek to restore our neighbor's reputation by disclosing his virtues, by admitting that we had no right to talk about him, and by asking others to forgive him and be kind. (By Rev. Edward Lodge Curran, PhD)

### The Use of the Social Communications Media

2493 - Within modern society the communications media play a major role in information, cultural promotion, and formation. This role is increasing, as a result of technological progress, the extent and diversity of the news transmitted, and the influence exercised on public opinion.

2494 – The information provided by the media is at the service of the common good. Society has a right to information based on truth, freedom, justice, and solidarity: “The proper exercise of this right demands that the content of the communication be true and - within the limits set by justice and charity - complete. Further, it should be communicated honestly and properly. This means that in the gathering and in the publication of news, the moral law and the legitimate rights and dignity of man should be upheld.” (Catechism of the Catholic Church P. 597)

Copyright 2018 by the Sovereign Order of Saint John of Jerusalem, Inc. All rights reserved. The O.S.J. Messenger and the Chancellor's Update are among the authorized publications of the Sovereign Order of Saint John of Jerusalem, Inc. and the Sovereign Order of Saint John of Jerusalem-Knights of Malta. World Headquarters and Convent of the Order are located in Hughesville, Maryland in the United States of America.



Jerusalem 1048-1291, Cyprus 1291-1310, Rhodes 1311-1523, Malta 1530-1798, Russia 1798-1907, U.S.A. 1908-

<http://sovereignorderofsaintjohnofjerusalemknightsofmalta.org/>