

Extracted from St John Vianney July 29, 2012 Bulletin

Honesty 1st by Carl Beyer & Friends

Jesus said, "I Am the Way, the TRUTH and the Life....."

I remember about twelve years ago trying to decide what to name my new business after selling the computer store I owned. I came up with, "Honesty 1st." It summed up what I wanted my business, and myself, to represent. I just visited www.honesty1st.com and it said, "Coming Soon." Honesty 1st, coming soon.....let's HOPE SO!

I feel every lie we tell pokes a hole in the integrity of our souls. Each hole lets in a bit more of the burning heat of Hell. If we look at the basis of most lies, it is to accomplish one of two things. The first is to avoid responsibility for something we have done, and the second is to gain something personally.

"Personal responsibility" is certainly lacking in our world and many of us do not even understand the meaning of that phrase. How many of us, when there is a problem, look for someone other than ourselves to blame? "It is not my fault, and to prove it I will stretch the truth, just a little, to show it was someone else's fault." Hmm, is not "stretching the truth" a phrase synonymous with a lie? And let us be blunt about it and admit that most of us believe that when we lie to the government, or others in authority, it is "not really a lie." Sorry folks, but it IS a lie to avoid personal responsibility. What did Jesus say about taxes? "Pay to Caesar what is Caesar's and pay to God what is God's." Jesus never told us to lie to the government, nor to tell lies to gain all we can of the government's money (Oh, and by the way, there IS no government money; it is MY TAX money you are receiving when you lie to our government.).

The second most common lie is in pursuance of That Other Master: money. Jesus said, "No one can serve two masters. He will either hate one and love the other or be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon." How many of us have gone to a store and simply lied to get our money back? How many of us have negotiated with our insurance companies to receive money we did not truly deserve? How many of us have bowed to the Master (money) by our lies? Yes, these ARE lies; they are NOT harmless, as many of us "believe" to justify our lies. We must be careful who we TRULY worship.

As parents, we must step up and stop showing our kids how to lie. Kids pay attention, not only to what we admonish them to do or not to do, but to what WE do. Kids especially learn our bad habits. They see us lie to the cop and they in turn lie to their teachers. We boast about how our "stories" (lies) have made us money on some deal, and our kids learn it is good to lie. Oh, and how many of us assume lying is standard practice in business? Shame on us. Yes, we may end up *financially* poorer following the line of honesty, but we can hold our heads high knowing how we have raised our children. We need to teach our kids that, while being honest might not gain us monetary wealth, it keeps us on the path toward Heaven.

Personally, I have just been too stupid to lie and to deal with liars. It is too difficult to keep track

of "stories" and seemed like such a waste of time. Somehow, I was supposed to be able to discern what was "important" and not to lie about "important" things. I once had a friend tell me he did not lie to friends so I had nothing to worry about. Immediately, I thought, "Great, now I have to figure out, in every conversation, am I *truly, still* friends with this person?" Too much effort! Simpler to Just Tell the Truth and choose friends who do the same.

Now, let me assure you, I have told plenty of lies over the years, and I regret every one of them. I was fortunate to be baptized into The Church at the age of twenty-eight, when my slate was wiped clean. But the devil still taps me on the shoulder sometimes, and a lie comes from my lips before I know what I have done. God, forgive me, and give me the strength to be truthful, no matter how hard it is and how much it costs me.

Go forth and take personal responsibility. Stop lying and speak the truth! Go forth and be a shining example of honesty. God Bless You All.