

**Some Notes on First Ethics Seminar – September 29, 2013**

|                  | <b>What is a lie?</b>   | <b>Why is a lie a sin?</b>  | <b>When is it not a sin to lie?</b>  | <b>Officious Lie</b>  |
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| <b>Catechism</b> | <p>“Speaking falsehood with intention of deceiving.” (Augustine) 2482</p> <p>“To lie is to speak or act against the truth in order to lead into error someone who has the right to know the truth.” 2483</p>  | <p>It is a profanation of speech, the purpose of which is to communicate truth. It is a failure of justice and charity. It does violence to another, deprives another from the ability to know, which is a condition of judgment and decision, it sows discord.</p> | <p>1<sup>st</sup> Ed. Catechism – if the other person lacks the right to know the truth.</p> | <p>Silent</p>   |
| <b>Aquinas</b>   | <p>Follows Augustine, but clarifies that what is “falsehood” depends on the intention of the speaker. The “essential notion of a lie is taken from formal falsehood, from the fact namely, that a person intends to say what is false; wherefore also the word "mendacium" [lie] is derived from its being in opposition to the "mind." On the one hand, it is sufficient for there to be a lie if the speaker intended to deceive, even if the statement is true. On the other hand, if the speaker said something untrue without intending to</p> | <p>Lying is naturally evil in its genus since it is an action bearing on undue matter. Words are naturally intellectual acts, and it is unnatural and undue to signify something not in one’s mind. Q. 110, Art. 3.</p>   | <p>Never</p>   | <p>Venial sin b/c the end intended is not contrary to charity, but still sinful. “A lie is sinful not only because it injures one's neighbor, but also on account of its inordinateness.... Now it is not allowed to make use of anything inordinate in order to ward off injury or defects from another: as neither is it lawful to steal in order to give an alms, except perhaps in a case of necessity when all things are common. Therefore it is not lawful to tell a lie in order to deliver another</p> |

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|              | deceive, this only material or accidental falsehood, insufficient to constitute falsehood for a lie. Q. 110, Art. 1.   |                            |  | from any danger whatever. Nevertheless it is lawful to hide the truth prudently, by keeping it back, as Augustine says.” Q. 110, Art. 3, Reply to Obj. 4  |
| <b>Smith</b> | Perhaps false signification that is not justified by the context or intention of the speaker?<br><br>Context makes the difference: for example, it is not a lie to reply “I’m fine” as a pleasantry, but it is a lie to reply “I’m fine” (if you’re not) to your doctor. | Silent                     | In a post-lapsarian world a “great deal of judicious false signification is necessary now to preserve harmony, justice, and truth.” Aquinas errs with respect to false signification in a way he does not err with respect to killing and taking property in that with respect to the former, he assumes man’s innocence, whereas in the latter cases he does not. Smith justifies jocose lies, officious lies, spying, and sting operations.<br><br>In a fallen world, speech does not only communicate truth; it also comforts, encourages, promotes civility, stymies the enemy, and protects the innocent. | Not sinful. The Nazi has no right to the truth.<br><br>No judgment made re Live Action. One relevant question would be, who gave Live Action due authority to utter false significations to frustrate Planned Parenthood? |

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| <b>Tollefsen</b> | An assertion in speech or action of something that the speaker believes is false – without regard to the interlocutor’s right to the truth. | <p>Per TB, a lie divides the speaker’s mind and body, the inner self from the outer self. Lying damages the speaker’s integrity. Speaking truth is how we establish community with others and how we love others. Lying damages this community and love.</p> <p>The division of the self that is the destruction of one’s integrity is intrinsic to the telling of a lie. By contrast, use of lethal force in self-defense does not cause such a division of oneself. Intending death is secondary to the use of force and can be accepted as a side effect.</p> | <p>Never</p> <p>Following Aquinas, allows feints in war because in context of war it is assumed that feints happen.</p> <p>Specifically rejects lying for espionage, police work, journalism.</p> | <p>Sinful, because it is not possible to weigh the goods of integrity and life against each other. Otherwise it would follow that we should forswear truth in order to save life. We know from the example of the martyrs that we ought not to forswear truth to preserve life.</p> |