

Msgr. Thomas McSweeney

Barriers

not only on what truth is, but Who Truth is on our own search, we might reflect a little more off the occasional "white lie." But as we travel suspect that most people aren't ready to swear to truth

thinner in that dress!"—harmless facethe other person or be too inconvenient I'm not here!" to "Honestly, you look bing? Either the truth would embarrass for ourselves, so we lie. From "Tell him less lie. Who hasn't at somehite lie, n. a minor or harmtime found an excuse for fib-

saving lies. No big thing.

of the most intriguing and influential gustine (354-430 A.D.), Bishop of Hippo, Doctor of the Church and one Christian writers of all time. No big thing unless you read St Au-

slightest intention to mislead others in He makes the case that even the

> still pretend to serve God who is Himself truth. to the truth. You cannot be a liar and lie, you violate your sacred obligation is unequivocal - whenever you tell a their pursuit of truth is a sin. His stand

selves? Silence is vague. Somebody can are just silent and keep the truth to ourwant. That isn't lying, is it? Well, to take from your silence whatever they Augustine it is. But what about those times when we

one meaning. a different meaning than we intended sible for the way someone interprets would be the same as a listener getting our silence. We might argue that it saying that we cannot be held responbecause a word we use has more than Many of us would probably quibble,

have lied. even if we speak the truth but know should our deception fail, we are still ceive our listener. Oh, by the way, tect us from lying if we intend to detion: neither silence nor vagueness prolieved and that is what you want, you trying to do. According to Augustine lying because that was what we were that for some reason it won't be be-The crux of the matter is our inten-

to live up to that standard! Wow! You would have to be a saint

search for truth, Augustine's argudeceive, as a betrayal of our shared barrier to that search. ments are understandable. Lying is a But if we see a lie, the intention to

Studies in the dynamics of commu-

flicted that truth is unrecognizable. whereby one's mind becomes so connication show that people who lie of-A sort of cognitive dissonance sets in ten begin to believe their lies are truth.

one's self. Other sins are easier after say another. It cheats both the other and all deceptions is to think one thing and pletely restored. Indeed, the worst of open, confidence can never be commatters where all should be fair and Once a deception has been practiced in Lying also affects relationships.

swer in God, he then spent the rest of own search for truth. Finding his ansion, even as he lived a rather earthy life. Yet he struggled for years with his mother Monica prayed for his converhe knew something about sins. His the One Eternal Truth. his life trying to live out his belief in Augustine would be the first to say

Omnipotent Good, who cares for each of us more not only on what truth is, but own search, we might reflect a little rests in You. and truth is Yourself. You made me for if we were all but one! Your law is truth "white lie." But as we travel on our ready to swear off the occasional Yourself, and my heart is restless until it as if no one else existed and for all of us as Who Truth is. As Augustine prayed: O I suspect that most people aren't

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