

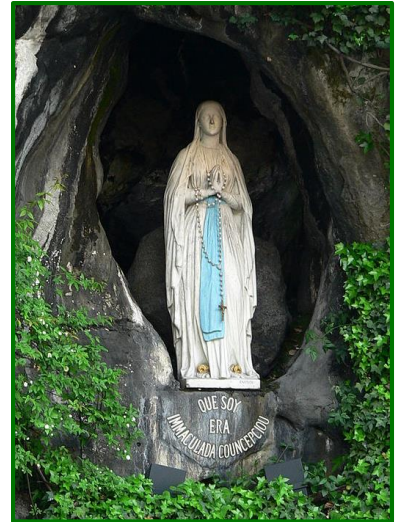
# The Phony in a Wheelchair

It is said that a favorite joke among San Francisco lawyers concerns the phony who fakes an injury in an automobile accident, comes to court in a wheelchair, and is awarded \$250,000 or more.

When the verdict is announced, the insurance company lawyer snaps, “You’re going to be tailed by a private eye wherever you go from now on, and as soon as you take one step out of that wheelchair, we’ll throw you in jail.”

The phony smiles and advises the lawyer pleasantly, “Don’t go to all that trouble. I’m going from here to the Waldorf in New York, then to the Savoy in London, then to the Ritz in Paris, then on to the French Riviera ... and after that to Lourdes for the miracle.”

The story is certain to produce some chuckles each time it is told; in part, because it is based in not-too-uncommon practices.



But there are a couple of lessons within it:

1. Planning ahead. Even swindlers understand the value of the concept.
2. In all seriousness, however, honesty is regarded as a facet of moral character and connotes positive and virtuous attributes. It is highly regarded, although its practice appears to be under increasing assault. According to *Wikipedia*, the free, online encyclopedia, honesty “means being trustworthy, loyal, fair and sincere.”

Honesty is valued in many ethnic and religious cultures. No doubt, every one of us had a mother who proclaimed, “Honesty is the best policy,” which was a proverb of Benjamin Franklin. And another of the Founding Fathers, Thomas Jefferson, in a letter to Nathaniel Macon, a U.S. senator from North Carolina, said. “Honesty is the first chapter in the book of wisdom.”

*Wikipedia* does issue a caution of sorts on the subject: “Others have noted, however, that too much honesty might be seen as undisciplined openness. For example, individuals may be perceived as being ‘too honest’ if they honestly express negative opinions of others, either without having been asked their opinion, or having been asked in a circumstance where the response would be trivial.”

(more)



That point reminds me of a story about the editor of a small-town newspaper who grew tired of being called a liar and announced that he would tell the truth in the future. The next issue contained the following item:

“Married – Miss Sylvan Rhodes and James Collins, last Saturday at the Baptist parsonage, by the Rev. J. Gordon. The bride is a very ordinary town girl, who doesn’t know any more about cooking than a jackrabbit, and never helped her mother three days in her life. She is not a beauty by any means and has a gait like a duck. The groom is an up-to-date loafer. He has been living off the old folks at home all his life and is now worth shucks. It will be a hard life.”

Well, all I can say about that is another of my mother’s pieces of advice: “If you can’t say anything good about anyone, don’t say anything at all.”

As always, the best wisdom is what the Bible has to offer:

*Lying lips are an abomination to the Lord, but those who deal truthfully are His delight* (Proverbs 12:22 NKJV).

– Beecher Hunter