

The Ten Commandments

“...the law of the Lord is perfect, it refreshes the soul; the decree of the Lord is trustworthy, giving wisdom to the simple; the precepts of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart; the command of the Lord is clear, enlightening the eye; the statutes of the Lord are true, all of them just; they are more precious than gold and sweeter than honey.” - Psalm 19

Prayer before Study

O ineffable Creator, true source of light and wisdom, origin of all things, be pleased to cast a beam of your radiance upon the darkness of my mind.

Take from me the double darkness of sin and ignorance in which I was born. Give me quickness of understanding, a retentive memory, the ability to grasp things correctly and fundamentally, and abundant grace of expression.

Order the beginning, direct the progress and perfect the achievement of my work. You who are true God and true Man and who live and reign forever and ever. Amen.

Love of God

- ▶ Traditionally, the first three of the Ten Commandments have been grouped together as those commandments which pertain to love and worship of God, with the other seven pertaining to love of neighbor.
- ▶ Notice their relevance to the “greatest commandment” of Christ: “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind...and you shall love your neighbor as yourself.” (Lk 10:27).
- ▶ The first three commandments teach us how we ought to relate to God, what honors and dishonors him and how we give to him what is his due in justice. The remaining seven deal with our relations with our neighbor.
- ▶ Notice that all the Commandments steer us away from the self and direct us outwards – towards God and towards others.

The First Commandment

- ▶ *I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. You shall have no other gods before Me. You shall not make for yourself a graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. You shall not bow down to them or serve them. -Exodus 20:2-5*

The First Commandment

- ▶ Why does God demand our worship? Is it because he is insecure and *needs* our worship?
- ▶ Of course not. God needs nothing. God commands us to worship him because in coming to him we come to our true source, and therein find true and abiding happiness.
- ▶ Man, being made in the image and likeness of God with reason and will, has what the Catechism calls a “vocation to truth” (CCC 2085).
- ▶ God is our ultimate Truth. He is our Creator and our ultimate end. It is therefore “right and just” that we seek him and worship him.

The Theological Virtues

- ▶ The first commandment embraces faith, hope and charity. These are known as the ‘theological virtues.’
- ▶ Faith is that virtue by which we believe in God and believe all that he has said and revealed to us, and that the Church proposes for our belief
- ▶ By faith, man freely commits his entire self to God
 - ▶ For this reason, the believer seeks to know and do God’s will
 - ▶ The disciple of Christ must not only keep the faith and live it, but also profess it and confidently bear witness to it. (CCC 1814-16)
 - ▶ “Everyone who acknowledges me before men, I also will acknowledge before my Father.” (Mt 10:32)

The Theological Virtues

- ▶ Hope is the confident expectation of divine blessing and the beatific vision of God, placing our trust in Christ's promises and relying not on our own strength, but on the help of God's grace.
- ▶ This is a supernatural virtue and not mere earthly optimism
 - ▶ We can therefore hope in the glory of heaven promised by God to those who love him and do his will.
- ▶ In every circumstance, each one of us should hope, with the grace of God, to persevere in faith to the end and to obtain the joy of heaven
 - ▶ The sinner, no matter how depraved and estranged from God, always has hope of repentance and return!

The Theological Virtues

- ▶ Charity is that virtue by which we love God above all things for his own sake, and our neighbor as ourselves for the love of God.
 - ▶ The practice of all the virtues is animated and inspired by charity
- ▶ Jesus made charity the ‘new commandment,’ summing up the entire Law of Moses and the Ten Commandments with the command to love God and neighbor
- ▶ Through charity, the Christian believer most perfectly imitates Christ, who ‘loved us to the end’ and manifested God’s love for all people through his sacrificial death on the Cross.

The Theological Virtues

- ▶ We love God not because we want him to love us or do something for us
 - ▶ Rather, we love God as a response to him who already loves us
 - ▶ And we love him simply because of his goodness and who he is as our God and Creator
- ▶ We love our neighbors not to look good, to win esteem or to score points
 - ▶ Rather, we love our neighbors in order to seek their good for their own sake, to love them as God loves them.
- ▶ Act of Charity - “O my God, I love you above all things, with my whole heart and soul, because you are all good and worthy of all my love. I love my neighbor as myself for love of you. I forgive all who have injured me, and I ask pardon of all whom I have injured. Amen.”

How do we sin against Faith?

- ▶ **Voluntary Doubt:** disregarding or refusal to hold as true what God has revealed and the Church proposes for belief.
 - ▶ Here we speak of the Deposit of Faith (the Ball)
- ▶ **Incredulity:** neglect of revealed truth or willful refusal to assent to it; general skepticism.
- ▶ **Heresy:** the obstinate, post-baptismal denial of some truth which must be believed with divine and Catholic faith, or an obstinate doubt concerning the same.
- ▶ **Schism:** refusal to submit to the Roman Pontiff or of communion with the members of the Church subject to him.
- ▶ **Apostasy:** the total repudiation of the Christian faith.

How do we sin against Hope?

- ▶ **Despair:** to cease to hope for one's personal salvation from God, for help in attaining it or for the forgiveness of sins.
 - ▶ Despair is contrary to God's goodness, justice and mercy, and is a form of pride.
 - ▶ Not the same as depression or having a bad day
- ▶ **Presumption:** there are two kinds:
 - ▶ either man presumes upon his own capacities and goodness to save himself without the assistance of God's grace
 - ▶ or man presumes upon God's mercy to obtain forgiveness without conversion and glory without merit.

How do we sin against charity?

One can sin against God's love in a variety of ways:

- ▶ **Indifference:** neglect or refusal to reflect on divine charity; it fails to consider its goodness and denies its power.
- ▶ **Ingratitude:** refusal to acknowledge divine charity and to return him love.
- ▶ **Lukewarmness:** negligence in responding to divine love or a refusal to give oneself to the prompting of charity.
- ▶ **Acedia:** spiritual sloth; a refusal of the joy that comes from God and going so far as to be repelled by divine goodness. Also, a refusal to exert oneself to do the things necessary to respond to divine grace.
- ▶ **Hatred of God:** despising God and denying his goodness. It presumes to curse God as the One who forbids sins and inflicts punishments.

“You shall have no other gods before me”

- ▶ Sins against the First Commandment include the following:
- ▶ **Superstition:** Attributing inherent powers to things that in themselves are only externals.
- ▶ **Idolatry:** The first commandment condemns polytheism and requires us neither to believe in, nor venerate, divinities other than the one true God.
 - ▶ Idolatry can also consist in attributing divine attributes to anything other than God.
 - ▶ Man commits idolatry whenever he honors and reveres a false god or idol, or a creature in place of God (power, pleasure, money, etc.)”

“You shall have no other gods before me”

- ▶ **Divination/Magic:** Recourse to Satan or demons, conjuring up the dead or other practices falsely supposed to unveil the future. Consulting horoscopes, astrology, palm reading, interpretation of omens and lots, and recourse to mediums or fortune tellers.
 - ▶ These all contradict the honor, respect and loving fear we owe to God alone, and the trust that we owe him.
- ▶ **Irreligion** consists primarily in a blatant disregard for sacred things or a treating of the sacred as something common.
- ▶ **Sacrilege** occurs when we profane or treat unworthily the sacraments, liturgical actions, or anything dedicated to God. It is the gravest of sins when committed against the Eucharist.

“You shall have no other gods before me”

- ▶ **Simony** consists of the buying or selling of spiritual things.
- ▶ **Atheism:** consists of a denial or rejection of God’s existence and takes many social forms.
- ▶ **Agnosticism** professes an ignorance as to God’s existence but amounts to practical atheism. It can sometimes be a sincere search, but often entails “indifferentism, a flight from the ultimate question of existence and a sluggish moral conscience” (CCC2123-28).

“You shall not make for yourself any graven image”

- ▶ In the Old Testament, the making of any image of God was strictly prohibited and enforced with the strictest punishments.
- ▶ The reason for this prohibition was that ancient man tended to assign divine attributes to images of divinity and thus ended up committing idolatry, worshiping the creature rather than the Creator
 - ▶ The idea was that the deity or its divine power ‘resided’ in the image
 - ▶ This was a common practice by the surrounding peoples, and it even influenced many Israelites

You shall not make for yourself any graven image

- ▶ Objection! Catholics have graven images all over the place. You're breaking the first commandment!!
- ▶ Remember – we do not assign divine attributes to images, nor do we believe that they possess any power, nor are they treated as talismans or 'good-luck charms.'
 - ▶ "For the honor of the image passes to the original; and he who shows reverence to the image, shows reverence to the substance of Him depicted in it." (St. Basil)
 - ▶ Any honor paid to an image is actually paid to the one depicted in the image, and thus is not idolatry.

The Second Commandment

- ▶ *“You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain.”* -Ex. 20:7
- ▶ The second commandment forbids the abuse of God’s name, but also of Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit, the Virgin Mary and all the saints.
 - ▶ It also forbids false oaths, which are promises made falsely in God’s name.
- ▶ **Blasphemy:** uttering reproach, defiance or ill words against God, and abusing his name. It extends to things spoken against the Church, the saints and sacred things in general. Blasphemy is a grave sin.
- ▶ **False oaths:** calling God’s holy name to witness a falsehood, or making magical use of the divine name. Both are serious sins.
- ▶ **Perjury:** making a promise under oath with no intention of keeping it or failing to keep a promise made under oath.

God's Name

- ▶ The holiness of God's name demands that we neither use it for trivial matters nor dishonor it once it is invoked.
 - ▶ "Blessed be the name of the Lord, both now and forever." – Ps 113:2
 - ▶ "Blessed be God; blessed be his holy name" – *The Divine Praises*
 - ▶ "Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel, who alone does wonderful deeds; blessed be his glorious name forever." – Ps 72:18
 - ▶ "Blessed are you, and praiseworthy, O Lord, the God of our ancestors, and glorious forever is your name." – Dn 3:26
- ▶ In general, use God's name only when speaking (reverently) about him or praying to him.

The Third Commandment

- ▶ *“Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor, and do all your work; but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God; in it you shall not do any work.”* -Ex. 20:8-10
- ▶ In the Old Testament, the Sabbath Day recalled Creation, and the deliverance of Israel from Egypt.
 - ▶ It served as a sign of God’s irrevocable covenant.
 - ▶ With the Sabbath, a portion of time was set aside and sanctified for the praise of God and the remembrance of his saving actions
 - ▶ It is still most important to do this...

The Third Commandment

- ▶ In the New Testament, the Sabbath is no longer the seventh day but the eighth day, the first day of the week upon which the Lord Jesus rose from the dead.
- ▶ Sunday worship observes the natural moral commandment inscribed in our heart to render God outward, visible, public and regular worship.
- ▶ Attendance at Mass on Sundays (and Holy Days) is a grave obligation
 - ▶ Before anything else, Mass is the worship of God, which is his due, by his people. (the virtue of religion)
 - ▶ Let Sunday Mass be a “given.” Let your Sunday revolve around Mass, not the other way around.

A day of grace and rest from work

- ▶ Therefore, that we keep all things in their proper order, it has always been fitting on Sundays to refrain from what the Church calls “servile labor.”
 - ▶ This is because servile labor tends to focus us on matters of this world and distract us from worship and love of God.
- ▶ However, the restriction on servile labor does *not* apply to good works and service to the sick, poor, elderly etc., nor does it apply to activities done in spending leisure time with one’s family and relatives.
 - ▶ Sabbath rest is a gift from God

A day of grace and rest from work

- ▶ Sunday rest frees us for divine worship (first) and leisure and relaxation (second). Don't reverse that order.
- ▶ *"When Sunday loses its fundamental meaning and becomes subordinate to a secular concept of 'weekend' dominated by such things as entertainment and sport, people stay locked within a horizon so narrow that they can no longer see the heavens...Once upon a time, Sunday morning was respected as a time for church, but now it's almost completely dominated by (activities) of all kinds...It leaves little room for God."* Pope St. John Paul II

The 4th Commandment

- ▶ *“Honor thy father and thy mother, that your days may be long in the land which the Lord your God gives you.”* - Dt 5:16
- ▶ The fourth commandment begins the second “tablet” of the Decalogue: those laws that govern our relations with other people.
- ▶ This commandment is the only commandment written in the *positive* terms of duties to be fulfilled.
- ▶ It covers several areas:
 - ▶ (directly) Duties to parents and family
 - ▶ (indirectly) Duties to the state and society
 - ▶ (remotely) Duties to those in authority

The 4th Commandment

- ▶ This commandment is addressed expressly to children, as the child/parent relationship is the most universal, but it concerns relations with extended family members as well.
- ▶ Filial respect is manifested by docility and *obedience*.
 - ▶ “Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord” (Eph. 6:1).
- ▶ Filial respect extends indirectly to older brothers and sisters, as well as to teachers and anybody under whose authority the parents have placed the child.
- ▶ But as with all obedience, the duty to obey ends when the order is morally wrong or sinful, in which case there is an obligation to resist it.
- ▶ Part of honoring mother and father is taking responsibility for caring for them in their old age, and in times of illness, loneliness or distress.

The 5th Commandment

- ▶ *“Thou shalt not kill.”* -Ex 20:13
- ▶ Human life is sacred because the creation of every person involves a direct, creative act of God that forever puts that person in a unique relationship to the Creator that is not enjoyed by any other creature.
- ▶ God alone is the Master of life from beginning to end, and no person can assume for himself the right to directly destroy an innocent human life.
- ▶ The commandment only prohibits murder, and does not refer to legitimate self-defense, nor to killing animals for food.
 - ▶ Self-defense is a right of persons and societies, based on the legitimate desire that one’s own right to life be respected. Someone who defends his life is not guilty of murder, even if he deals his aggressor a lethal blow.
 - ▶ The goal of self-defense is protecting one’s own (or another’s) life and rendering the aggressor incapable of inflicting harm. Acting beyond these two goals is unlawful.

Capital Punishment

- ▶ Pope Francis' recent statement:
- ▶ “Recourse to the death penalty on the part of legitimate authority, following a fair trial, was long considered an appropriate response to the gravity of certain crimes and an acceptable, albeit extreme, means of safeguarding the common good.
- ▶ “However, there is an increasing awareness that the dignity of the person is not lost even after the commission of very serious crimes ...(and) more effective systems of detention have been developed which ensure the due protection of citizens (that) do not deprive the guilty of the possibility of redemption.
- ▶ “Consequently, the Church teaches that...the death penalty is inadmissible because it is an attack on the inviolability and dignity of the person.” (CCC 2267)

Abortion

- ▶ The Church teaches that a human person comes into existence from the first moment of conception, when the soul is immediately created by God and joined to the embryo.
- ▶ The Church recognizes that every human being is by the very fact a human person as well, and possesses the rights of a person, the most fundamental of these being the right to life.
- ▶ Therefore, anything that would not be morally permissible to do to a person outside the womb is likewise not permissible for somebody *inside* the womb.
- ▶ Thus having an abortion or formal cooperation with one is a grave offense
- ▶ The inalienable right to life must be a constitutive element of a civil society and its legislation, “from the moment of conception until death” (CCC 2273) and the Church (and many others of good will) continue to advocate for laws safeguarding the rights and dignity of the unborn.

Euthanasia

- ▶ What is true of the dignity of persons at the beginning of life is also true at the end.
- ▶ Those whose lives are diminished or weakened deserve special respect and care. Whatever its motives or means, direct euthanasia consists of actively and purposefully putting an end to the lives of handicapped, sick or dying persons and is always gravely immoral
- ▶ Discontinuing medical procedures that are burdensome, dangerous, extraordinary, or disproportionate to the expected outcome can be legitimate.
 - ▶ Nutrition and hydration are considered ordinary medical care and typically must always be provided, unless harmful.

Suicide

- ▶ We are stewards, not owners, of the life God gives us.
- ▶ Suicide is wrong for several reasons:
 - ▶ it contradicts the natural instinct of the human being to preserve and perpetuate his life.
 - ▶ it is gravely contrary to the just love of self,
 - ▶ it is an injustice towards God to whom every person belongs and contrary to the love of God,
 - ▶ it is a sin against charity (love of neighbor) in the family bonds it damages and the poor example it sets.
 - ▶ Cooperation with another's suicide is gravely immoral

Suicide

- ▶ Oftentimes persons who take their own lives may not be in their right mind, and due to this fact their guilt for this sin is questionable.
- ▶ The Catechism says that “grave psychological disturbances, anguish or grave fear of hardship, suffering or torture can diminish the responsibility of the one committing suicide.
- ▶ “We should not despair of the eternal salvation of persons who have taken their own lives...the Church prays for them...” (CCC 2283).

The 6th and 9th Commandments

- ▶ *“Thou shalt not commit adultery.”* -Ex. 20:14
- ▶ *“Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife.”* -Ex. 20:17
- ▶ *Adultery* refers to marital infidelity. The sixth commandment condemns adultery absolutely and the ninth commandment forbids even the desire for it.
- ▶ The sixth commandment, together with the ninth, encompass the whole of human sexuality, both in its external manifestation and in its interior dispositions.
- ▶ Sermon on the Mount: “You have heard that it was said, ‘Do not commit adultery.’ But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart” (Matt. 5:27-28).

Sins against the 6th and 9th Commandments

- ▶ *Adultery* refers to marital infidelity. The absolute duty to avoid it applies whether one or both parties are married.
- ▶ *Fornication* is the sexual union of an unmarried man and an unmarried woman
- ▶ *Lust* is the disordered desire for sexual pleasure, and using another person for one's own sexual satisfaction
- ▶ *Masturbation* is the gravely disordered action of sexual self-stimulation

Sins against the 6th and 9th Commandments

- ▶ *Pornography*, the removing of the sexual act from the intimacy of the partners in order to intentionally display it to a third party.
- ▶ “It offends against chastity because it perverts the conjugal act, the intimate giving of spouses to each other. It does grave injury to the dignity of its participants since each one becomes an object of base pleasure and illicit profit for others. It is a grave offense. Civil authorities should prevent the production and distribution of pornographic materials” (CCC 2354).
- ▶ *Prostitution* reduces the person to an instrument of sexual pleasure. Both the ones who sell themselves and the ones who pay gravely violate chastity.

Sins against the 6th and 9th Commandments

- ▶ *Homosexual acts* are always against the will of God and are intrinsically disordered. Scripture presents them as acts of grave depravity (Gen 19:1-29, Rom 1:24-27, 1 Cor 6:10)
- ▶ Homosexual acts are contrary to the natural law; they close the sexual act to the gift of life and do not proceed from a genuine affective and sexual complementarity. They cannot be approved under any circumstances (CCC 2357).
 - ▶ Homosexual persons are called to chastity, just like all people. They ought not to be unjustly discriminated against and ought to be given the dignity and respect due to all persons.

Purification of the Heart

- ▶ The “heart” is the seat of the moral personality, and the struggle against sin is nothing less than the struggle to purify the heart. All evil deeds begin as evil desires that flow from a heart not sufficiently detached from the things of this world.
 - ▶ Jesus said, “Out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, fornication...” (Matt. 15:19)
 - ▶ “Create in me a clean heart, O God.” –Ps 51:10
- ▶ Love of God prevents us from violating his holy laws and the holy temple in which he dwells (our bodies). Love of our neighbors prevents us from using them or leading them into sin.

The 7th and 10th Commandments

- ▶ “*Thou shalt not steal*” -Ex. 20:15
- ▶ “*Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor’s house...or anything that belongs to thy neighbor.*” -Ex. 20:17
- ▶ The seventh commandment forbids unjustly taking or withholding the goods of another, while the tenth commandment forbids the coveting of the belongings of others.
- ▶ They command justice and charity in the care of possessions and the fruits of people’s labor.
- ▶ Respect for the goods of others is a form of *justice*, which renders to others what is their due.
- ▶ It is also a demonstration of *solidarity* with others, remembering the Golden Rule (Matt. 7:12)
- ▶ There exists a duty to repay and make satisfaction for what was taken

Sins against the 7th & 10th Commandments

- ▶ First and foremost, the seventh commandment forbids *theft*, defined as usurping another's property against the reasonable will of the owner.
- ▶ Also falling under this commandment are greed/avarice and envy
- ▶ We reasonably have the desire for the things we need (to eat when we are hungry, get warm when we are cold, etc.).
- ▶ In and of themselves, these desires are good, but they can easily become disordered when they exceed the limits of reason and cause us to become covetous towards the belongings of others, even to the point of stealing/usurping them.

The 8th Commandment

- ▶ *“Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.”* -Ex. 20:16
- ▶ The eighth commandment forbids misrepresenting the truth to others.
- ▶ This commandment flows from our basic vocation to bear witness to God who is Truth. Therefore, any undermining of the truth is an offense against the holiness of God, “who can neither deceive nor be deceived.”
- ▶ Truth or truthfulness is the virtue which consists in showing oneself true in deeds and truthful in words, and in guarding against duplicity, dissimulation, and hypocrisy.

Sins against the 8th Commandment

- ▶ *Lying is the most fundamental way of sinning against the truth.*
- ▶ *Jesus denounces lying as a work of the devil: “[Satan] was a murderer from the beginning, and has nothing to do with the truth, because there is no truth in him...for he is a liar and the father of lies” (Jn 8:44).*
 - ▶ We want no part in that!
- ▶ *False witness is a statement contrary to the truth told in court.*
 - ▶ If it is done under oath, it becomes *perjury*.
 - ▶ Lies told in public take on a particular gravity, and both are grave sins, especially when they harm an innocent person.
- ▶ *Detraction* occurs when one, without good reason, discloses another’s faults and failings to a person who does not need to know them.
- ▶ *Calumny* is the damaging of another’s reputation by false statements made against them.

God's laws are a gift and a blessing...

- ▶ “...the law of the Lord is perfect, it refreshes the soul; the decree of the Lord is trustworthy, giving wisdom to the simple; the precepts of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart; the command of the Lord is clear, enlightening the eye; the statutes of the Lord are true, all of them just; they are more precious than gold and sweeter than honey.” - Psalm 19
- ▶ God's laws reveal to us his eternal will, his heart and his mind. They lead us to him. Love of God and of neighbor help us imitate God, who is love itself.
- ▶ Therefore, they are not a burden, but a gift and a blessing....

Next Week...

- ▶ The Sacrament of Reconciliation and the Forgiveness of Sins
- ▶ *The Search* begins this Thursday at 7:00pm in the parish hall
- ▶ Catechumens (non-baptized)
 - ▶ Sunday, Feb 21
 - ▶ Rite of Sending - 9:30 a.m. Mass in the Church
 - ▶ Rite of Election – 3:00 p.m. at St. Bonaventure
 - ▶ BIG DAY – Easter Vigil, April 4 at 8 p.m.
- ▶ Candidates (already baptized)
 - ▶ BIG DAY – Easter Sunday, April 4 at 9:30 a.m.

- ▶ Glory be to the Father, and to the +Son and to the Holy Spirit. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.