

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

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INTRODUCTION

Then God spoke all these words:

“I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery. You shall not have other gods beside me. You shall not make for yourself an idol or a likeness of anything in the heavens above or on the earth below or in the waters beneath the earth; you shall not bow down before them or serve them. For I, the Lord, your God, am a jealous God, inflicting punishment for their ancestors’ wickedness on the children of those who hate me, down to the third and fourth generation but showing love down to the thousandth generation of those who love me and keep my commandments.

You shall not invoke the name of the Lord, your God, in vain. For the Lord will not leave unpunished anyone who invokes his name in vain.

Remember the sabbath day—keep it holy. Six days you may labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a sabbath of the Lord your God. You shall not do any work, either you, your son or your daughter, your male or female slave, your work animal, or the resident alien within your gates. For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea and all that is in them; but on the seventh day he rested. That is why the Lord has blessed the sabbath day and made it holy.

Honor your father and your mother, that you may have a long life in the land the Lord your God is giving you.

You shall not kill.

You shall not commit adultery.

You shall not steal.

You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.

You shall not covet your neighbor’s house. You shall not covet your neighbor’s wife, his male or female slave, his ox or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor.”

Ex. 20:1-17

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The Ten Commandments or Decalogue (ten words) designate the collection of precepts written on two tables of stone “with the finger of God”¹ and given to Moses by God on Mount Sinai. The rest of the Mosaic Law, “The body of juridical, moral, and ceremonial institutions, laws and decisions ascribed by Christian and Hebrew tradition to Moses”², is comprised in the last four books of the Torah or Pentateuch. The Torah consists of the first five books of the Hebrew Bible. The Ten Commandments are the words of God as set forth in Exodus and Deuteronomy.³

Through Moses, God made a covenant with the Israelites on Mt. Sinai; God said, “*If you obey me completely and keep my covenant, you will be my treasured possession among all peoples.*”⁴ The people answered together, “Everything the Lord has said, we will do.”⁵

Freedom from slavery is the central theme of the gift of the Commandments and the law given to the Israelites when God led them out slavery from the land of Egypt.⁶ God, through Moses, led the Israelites out of physical bondage. Jesus came to reconcile us with God and to teach us how we can be free from the bondage of sin. The full meaning of the Ten Commandments was revealed in the New Covenant of Jesus Christ.⁷ Man’s moral life has all of its meaning in and through the New Covenant.⁸ The New Covenant was given to us by Jesus when He sacrificed His body and poured out His blood so that all men, Jews and Gentiles alike, may be reconciled with God through belief in Jesus.⁹

God revealed Himself to us, led us out of slavery, and gave us guidelines within which to live a moral existence in worship and thanksgiving to Him.¹⁰ These guidelines did not apply only to the period in which Jesus lived on earth; they apply for all time. Keeping the Commandments is our response to God’s love and shows our love for God.¹¹ In keeping the Commandments, man cooperates with God’s loving plan of salvation.¹²

The Ten Commandments state what is required in love of God and love of each other. The first three commandments address love of God. The other seven commandments address love of neighbor.¹³ When speaking to the Scribes of His time Jesus summed up the Ten Commandments into two “Great Commandments”, love of God and love of neighbor.¹⁴ Jesus further explained how to live the commandments in the Beatitudes, which are included in chapters 5, 6, and 7 of the Gospel of Matthew.

¹ Ex 31:18

² Reilly, T. (1911). Mosaic Legislation. In *The Catholic Encyclopedia*. New York: Robert Appleton Company. Retrieved July 26, 2017 from New Advent: <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/10582c.htm>;

³ Ex. 20:1-17; Deut. 5:6-21; CCC 2056; CCC 2063

⁴ Ex. 19:5

⁵ Ex 19:8

⁶ CCC 2069

⁷ CCC 2056

⁸ CCC 2061

⁹ CCC 602-603

¹⁰ CCC 2062

¹¹ John 14:15

¹² CCC 2062

¹³ CCC 2067

¹⁴ Mark 12:29-31

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The emotional and physical feelings we experience when we ‘love’ someone are not the source of love but a consequence of love. One of the key elements of love is self-sacrifice. It is what we are willing to do for others not what others are willing to do for us. Jesus said, “*No one has greater love than this, to lay down one’s life for one’s friends.*”¹⁵ Love is demonstrated by actions, not words. Jesus laid down his life for us so that we could have eternal life with God through belief in Him.¹⁶

St. Paul gives us some understanding of the love Jesus has for us and expects from us; the love of which the Commandments speak.

*“If I speak in human and angelic tongues but do not have love, I am a resounding gong or a clashing cymbal. And if I have the gift of prophecy and comprehend all mysteries and all knowledge; if I have all faith so as to move mountains but do not have love, I am nothing. If I give away everything I own, and if I hand my body over so that I may boast but do not have love, I gain nothing. Love is patient, love is kind. It is not jealous, [love] is not pompous, it is not inflated, it is not rude, it does not seek its own interests, it is not quick-tempered, it does not brood over injury, it does not rejoice over wrongdoing but rejoices with the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails.”*¹⁷

Love, then, is the source of all good. Scripture tells us, “*God is love, and whoever remains in love remains in God and God in him.*”¹⁸ Love is the key to keeping God’s Commandments. Jesus Christ is the embodiment of God’s self-sacrificing love for us,¹⁹ the sacrifice that is offered daily at every Mass so that we can continue to share in God’s love for us.

The Ten Commandments are as relevant today as they were when God first revealed them, and they will be relevant until the Parousia, the second coming of Christ in His glorified form. God makes his will known to each one of us individually, and he also makes his will known to everyone.²⁰

As we look at the commandments given to the Israelites in the Old Testament, we will also examine how we are told to live them in the New Testament.

¹⁵ John 15:13

¹⁶ John 3:16

¹⁷ 1 Cor. 13:1-8

¹⁸ 1 John 4:16

¹⁹ John 3:16

²⁰ CCC 2062-2063

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1. YOU SHALL NOT HAVE OTHER GODS BESIDE ME²¹

The first three commandments focus on love of God who instructs us “*You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.*”²² The first three commandments tell us how we should show our love for God.

1. God made a covenant with the Israelites at Mount Sinai after he brought them out of slavery in Egypt with great signs and wonders. Through Moses He said to the Israelites, “*If you obey me completely and keep my covenant, you will be my treasured possession among all peoples.*”²³ The first and most important commandment He gave to them is, “*I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery. You shall not have other gods beside me. You shall not make for yourself an idol or a likeness of anything in the heavens above or on the earth below or in the waters beneath the earth; you shall not bow down before them or serve them.*”²⁴
2. The Commandments are precepts meant for man’s good, rules of behavior that will allow man to live in the goodness and dignity that God intended for His creation.²⁵ But, from the very beginning Adam and Eve had a disobedient and rebellious nature,²⁶ which led to a disordered relationship with God and man, and with man and God’s creation.²⁷
3. Jesus is the ‘seed’ of Mary, the second Eve.²⁸ Adam and Eve were disobedient to God, gave in to the temptation of the serpent, and as a result expelled from the Garden of Eden. Jesus was obedient to God, resisted the serpent (devil) when He was tempted,²⁹ and cried out to His Father in the garden of Gethsemane before his Passion³⁰ thereby gaining redemption for all mankind.³¹
4. In Deuteronomy, Moses reminded the Israelites that they should worship only God,” *Hear, O Israel! The Lord is our God, the Lord alone.*”³² In the Gospel of Matthew Jesus said, “*The Lord, your God, shall you worship and him alone shall you serve.*”³³
5. The first commandment requires us to love God above all things. It is only through love of God that man can, through Jesus Christ, get a glimpse of the glory that God has promised. In the Gospel of Matthew Jesus said, “*The first is this: ‘Hear, O Israel! The Lord our God is Lord alone! You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.*”³⁴

²¹ Ex. 20:2-6; Deut. 6:13-15

²² Mt 22:37

²³ Ex 19:5

²⁴ Ex. 2-5; Deut. 5:7

²⁵ Gen. 1:31

²⁶ Gen. 3:1-6

²⁷ Gen. 3:17-19

²⁸ CCC 511

²⁹ Mt. 4:8-10; Lk. 4:5-8

³⁰ Mark 14:36

³¹ CCC 616

³² Deut. 6:4

³³ Mt. 4:10

³⁴ Mark 12:28-30

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6. When we confess that we worship the one and true God, it is through God's self-revelation to us.³⁵ It opens us to grow in faith, to seek His merciful love, and to hope in His promises. In loving God, we are therefore strengthened in faith, hope and love (Charity) by God.³⁶ These three Theological Virtues³⁷ are good habits of our mind and will that help us to draw closer to God. The Theological virtues dispose us to the Cardinal virtues; Prudence, Justice, Fortitude and Temperance.³⁸
7. The Theological and Cardinal virtues strengthen us against sin, help to inform our conscience, and keep us on the path towards our final goal – eternal life with God. By freely accepting the Triune God as our Creator, our Redeemer, and our Sanctifier, we may, *“fight a good fight by having faith and a good conscience. Some, by rejecting conscience, have made a shipwreck of their faith.”*³⁹
8. The depth of God's first Commandment can only be realized if we look at the many gods that are followed in society today – ego, money, pleasure, power, material possessions, etc. Only then can we understand God's warning, *“You shall not go after other gods.”*⁴⁰ Anything that we put before God makes us less able to surrender ourselves totally to God.
9. Accepting God as the one true God forbids the faithful from superstition and irreligion.⁴¹ Superstition, idolatry, divination, magic, tempting God, sacrilege, simony, atheism, and agnosticism are all contrary to a belief in the one true God.⁴²
10. Trying to make an image of God who no one can describe is also forbidden. Moses told the Israelites, *“Because you saw no form at all on the day the Lord spoke to you at Horeb from the midst of the fire, be strictly on your guard not to act corruptly by fashioning an idol for yourselves to represent any figure, whether it be the form of a man or of a woman, the form of any animal on the earth, the form of any bird that flies in the sky, the form of anything that crawls on the ground, or the form of any fish in the waters under the earth.”*⁴³
11. Praying to or adoring relics and sacred images is a form of idolatry.⁴⁴

³⁵ Mt. 16:17; CCC 2085

³⁶ CCC 2086

³⁷ CCC 2086-2097; CCC 2656-2658

³⁸ CCC 1805-1809

³⁹ 1Tim. 1:18-19

⁴⁰ Deut. 6:14

⁴¹ CCC 2110

⁴² CCC 2111-2128

⁴³ Deut. 4:15-19

⁴⁴ CCC 2129-2132

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2. YOU SHALL NOT TAKE THE NAME OF THE LORD, YOUR GOD, IN VAIN⁴⁵

1. Jesus affirms this commandment to His disciples and the crowd in His Sermon on the Mount.⁴⁶ God's name is to be respected and kept holy. It is sacred and should only be used to bless, praise and glorify God.⁴⁷ In Old Testament times, God's name was so revered that it was never spoken.⁴⁸ The name inspired feelings of fear and awe,⁴⁹ which we as Christians should have in His presence. We should also have fear and awe for the name of each person of the Triune God; Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
2. But fear and awe should give way to adoration and respect⁵⁰ as we come to a more intimate knowledge of our God and understand that we experience his mercy and love every moment of our lives.⁵¹
3. We should never improperly use the name of the Triune God, and by extension, the mother of God, Mary, and the saints who have obeyed God and done His will in an exemplary way.⁵²
4. We may make a vow⁵³ to the Lord but must never blaspheme. Swearing trivial oaths, or swearing false oaths (lies) involve references to God and is forbidden.⁵⁴ Jesus addressed the second commandment In the Sermon on the Mount; *“Again you have heard that it was said to your ancestors, ‘Do not take a false oath, but make good to the Lord all that you vow.’ But I say to you, do not swear at all; Let your ‘Yes’ mean ‘Yes,’ and your ‘No’ mean ‘No.’ Anything more is from the evil one.”*⁵⁵
5. The name of every baptized Christian is sacred because God has called each of us by name.⁵⁶ Since we are made in the image and likeness of God,⁵⁷ we must respect the dignity of man.⁵⁸

⁴⁵ Ex 20:7; Deut 5:11

⁴⁶ Mt. 5:33-34

⁴⁷ CCC 2142-2143

⁴⁸ CCC 209

⁴⁹ CCC 2144

⁵⁰ CCC 2145

⁵¹ CCC 211

⁵² CCC 2146

⁵³ CCC 2102; A vow is an act of devotion in which the Christian dedicates himself to God or promises him some good work.

⁵⁴ CCC 2147-2155

⁵⁵ Mt. 5:33-34, 37; Jas. 5:12

⁵⁶ Isa 43:1; John 10:3

⁵⁷ Gen 1:27

⁵⁸ CCC 2156-2159

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3. REMEMBER TO KEEP HOLY THE SABBATH DAY⁵⁹

1. From Old Testament times the Sabbath (the seventh day) was a holy day and if anyone worked on the Sabbath he would be put to death.⁶⁰ God established the Sabbath as an everlasting covenant with the Israelites.
2. In the Gospels there are many incidents where Jesus was accused of violating the Sabbath law. Jesus respected the holiness of the Sabbath although He constantly challenged the Pharisees' rigid interpretation of the law by performing good works of mercy and charity on the Sabbath.⁶¹
3. Jesus, the Son of God, proclaimed to the Pharisees that the Sabbath was made for man and that He was lord of the Sabbath.⁶² Jesus showed that He is lord of the Sabbath through His suffering, death and resurrection. Jesus was crucified on a Friday, Good Friday, and subsequently rose from the dead on Sunday, the third day after he was crucified, Easter Sunday.⁶³ Sunday became the first day of the week because Christ's resurrection recalls the first creation and symbolizes the new creation.⁶⁴
4. Sunday, the Lord's Day, is a day for Christians to celebrate our Lord. The Psalmist says, "*This is the day the Lord has made; let us rejoice in it and be glad.*"⁶⁵ Christians have thus replaced the Old Testament ceremonial observance of the Sabbath with the observance of the first day of the new creation, the Lord's Day.⁶⁶
5. The Sunday celebration of the Lord's Day and his Eucharist is at the heart of the life of the Catholic Church. "Sunday is the day on which the paschal mystery is celebrated in light of the apostolic tradition and is to be observed as the foremost holy day of obligation in the universal Church."⁶⁷
6. Christian assembly on the Lord's Day dates from the beginnings of the apostolic age. In the Book of Acts we read, "*They devoted themselves to the teaching of the apostles and to the communal life, to the breaking of the bread and to the prayers. Awe came upon everyone, and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles.*"⁶⁸
7. "Participation in the communal celebration of the Sunday Eucharist is a testimony of belonging, and of being faithful to Christ and to his Church. The faithful give witness by this to their communion in faith and charity."⁶⁹
8. "Sanctifying Sundays and holy days requires a common effort. Every Christian should avoid making unnecessary demands on others that would hinder them from

⁵⁹ Ex 20:8-10; cf. Deut. 5:12-15; CCC 2168-2173

⁶⁰ Ex 31:15-16

⁶¹ Mk 1:21; Jn. 9:14-16

⁶² Mark 2:27-28

⁶³ Luke 24:7

⁶⁴ CCC 2174

⁶⁵ Ps. 118:24

⁶⁶ CCC 2175

⁶⁷ CCC 2177

⁶⁸ Acts 2:42-43; CCC 2178

⁶⁹ CCC 2182

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observing the Lord's Day. Traditional activities (sport, restaurants, etc.), and social necessities (public services, etc.), require some people to work on Sundays, but everyone should still take care to set aside sufficient time for leisure. With temperance and charity the faithful will see to it that they avoid the excesses and violence sometimes associated with popular leisure activities."⁷⁰

⁷⁰ CCC 2187

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4. HONOR YOUR FATHER AND YOUR MOTHER⁷¹

Commandments four through ten address Love of Neighbor. Jesus said to his disciples: "*Love one another even as I have loved you.*"⁷² One of the Scribes asked Jesus, "'Which is the first of all the commandments?'" Jesus replied, "*The first is this: 'Hear, O Israel! The Lord our God is Lord alone! You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.'*" But Jesus continued, "*The second is this: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'* There is no other commandment greater than these."⁷³ Commandments four through ten instruct us on how to love our neighbor.

1. *Children, obey your parents [in the Lord], for this is right. "Honor your father and mother." This is the first commandment with a promise; "that it may go well with you and that you may have a long life on earth."*⁷⁴
2. When Jesus was a child of 12 years, he demonstrated obedience when his parents took him to Jerusalem for the Feast of the Passover. Jesus remained behind in Jerusalem without His parent's knowledge. When they found him in the Temple they asked him why he had remained behind. Jesus replied, "*Why were you looking for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?*" Jesus at that young age already knew he had to do God's will, but he was obedient to his parents. St. Luke tells us, "*He went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was obedient to them*".⁷⁵
3. God's Commandments show us that we honor God first and then we honor our parents who gave us the gift of life and nourished us. Parents have the responsibility to take care of the physical and spiritual needs of their children. Children, whether minors or adults, have the obligation to honor and respect their parents.⁷⁶ By this command God ordains the importance and obligation of family members to each other. The family unit is one of the pillars of the Church.⁷⁷
4. The fourth commandment is directed to children and the universal relationship of children to parents. The Book of Proverbs tells us, "*Observe, my son, your father's command, and do not reject your mother's teaching; Keep them fastened over your heart always, tie them around your neck. When you lie down they will watch over you, when you wake, they will share your concerns; wherever you turn, they will guide you.*"⁷⁸
5. Our affection, honor, and gratitude should be extended to all members of our family – our grandparents and ancestors, as well as to other members of our family descended from our ancestors. The respect given to parents should also be extended to those who have been given the authority to guide us, "Instructors, teachers, leaders, magistrates, those who govern, all who exercise authority over others or over a community of persons."⁷⁹

⁷¹ Ex. 20:12; Deut. 5:16; Mt. 19:19

⁷² Jn 13:34

⁷³ Mk 12:28-31

⁷⁴ Eph. 6:1-3

⁷⁵ Luke 2:41-52

⁷⁶ CCC 2197

⁷⁷ CCC 2198

⁷⁸ Prov. 6:20-22

⁷⁹ CCC 2199

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6. The Catechism tells us, “As long as a child lives at home with his parents, the child should obey his parents in all that they ask of him when it is for his good or that of the family. Children should also obey the reasonable directions of their teachers and all to whom their parents have entrusted them. But if a child is convinced in conscience that it would be morally wrong to obey a particular order, he must not do so.”⁸⁰
7. The Church also tells us that grown children have a responsibility to provide for their parents material and moral support in old age and in times of illness, loneliness, or distress.
8. God created man and woman and instituted the first human family.⁸¹ *God created mankind in his image; in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. God blessed them and God said to them: Be fertile and multiply...*⁸² It is God’s plan that families are the intended consequence of the union of a man and a woman. A man and woman serving each other for the generation and proper upbringing of children was ordained by God.
9. When mankind fell from God’s grace through the disobedience of Adam and Eve, God promised mankind a way back to union with Him.⁸³ This would be fulfilled through the children of Abraham to whom God made a promise.⁸⁴ God’s promise reached its fulfillment in Jesus.
10. During His ministry on earth Jesus was asked, “*Is it lawful for a husband to divorce his wife?*”⁸⁵ Jesus replied, “*From the beginning of creation, ‘God made them male and female. For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother [and be joined to his wife], and the two shall become one flesh.’ So they are no longer two but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, no human being must separate.*”⁸⁶
11. God blessed the union of the first man and woman, the union we now call marriage. Jesus reminded his followers and the legal scholars of his time that God’s intent for marriage is that it should not be dissolved by human effort. Thus the Sacramental nature of marriage was revealed.
12. Children are the fulfillment of Sacramental marriage and conjugal love. “Marriage and the family are ordered to the good of the spouses and to the procreation and education of children.”⁸⁷ It is also God’s intent that marriage is a unity between a man and a woman. This unity, together with children, forms a family. Sacramental marriage, marriage in the eyes of God, “is prior to any recognition by public authority, which has an obligation to recognize it.”⁸⁸
13. The love between the members of a Christian family demands respect for each other. St Paul tells us in Ephesians that Children should obey their parents and he also says,

⁸⁰ CCC 2217

⁸¹ CCC 2203

⁸² Gen. 1:27-28

⁸³ Gen. 3:15

⁸⁴ Gen 12:2-3

⁸⁵ Mk. 10:2

⁸⁶ Mk. 10:6-9

⁸⁷ CCC 2201

⁸⁸ CCC 2202

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parents should not, “Provoke your children to anger, but bring them up with the training and instruction of the Lord.”⁸⁹ The family then, is a communion of persons, a reflection of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. It is a unit bound by faith, hope and love and can be viewed as a domestic church, a fundamental unit of the Church, the Body of Christ. By the procreation and education of children, the family reflects God’s work of creation.⁹⁰

⁸⁹ Eph. 6:4; CCC 2204-2205

⁹⁰ CCC 2205

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5. YOU SHALL NOT KILL⁹¹

1. “Human life is sacred because from its beginning it involves the creative action of God and it remains for ever in a special relationship with the Creator, who is its sole end.”⁹²
2. “God alone is the Lord of life from its beginning until its end: no one can under any circumstance claim for himself the right directly to destroy an innocent human being.”⁹³
3. Anyone who cooperates in the direct or intentional killing of another human being is a guilty of a grave sin.⁹⁴
4. Taking the life of an innocent person is contrary to the dignity God gave to man.⁹⁵ God created man in His image, and man is filled with the holiness of his creator.⁹⁶ Therefore it is wrong for someone to murder an innocent person thereby destroying God’s holy creation.
5. In the Book of Genesis we read that as a consequence of original sin, man has the tendency to become the enemy of his fellow man. Adam had two sons Cain and Abel and, as a result of envy and anger, Cain murdered Abel.⁹⁷
6. In the Book of Exodus God told the Israelites, “The innocent and the just you shall not put to death, for I will not acquit the guilty.”⁹⁸ In the New Law, Jesus reminds His Disciples about the command God gave to their ancestors “You shall not kill”⁹⁹ and He expanded upon it. Jesus went even further. In opposition to not killing our neighbor, Jesus also told us to “love your enemies.”¹⁰⁰
7. Jesus also warned against anger, hatred and vengeance. Jesus said to His disciples, “You have heard that it was said to your ancestors ‘you shall not kill; and whoever kills will be liable to judgment. But I say to you, whoever is angry with his brother will be liable to judgment.”¹⁰¹
8. Instinctively we know that killing someone is wrong unless in self-defense or if we are fighting in war. Jesus commands us to love ourselves and to love one another.¹⁰² We have the right to life until our creator calls us to Himself. Therefore, we have a right to defend our life even if our attacker is unintentionally killed in the process. However, one must not use more violence than necessary in defending oneself.¹⁰³
9. If someone or an institution is responsible for protecting the lives of others, they have a

⁹¹ Ex. 20:13; Deut. 5:17

⁹² CCC 2258

⁹³ CCC 2258

⁹⁴ CCC 2268

⁹⁵ CCC 2261

⁹⁶ Gen. 1:27

⁹⁷ Gen. 4:8-11; CCC 2259

⁹⁸ Ex. 23:7, CCC 2261

⁹⁹ Mt. 5:21

¹⁰⁰ Mt. 5:44

¹⁰¹ Mt. 5:21; CCC 2262

¹⁰² Mt. 19:19; Jn. 13:34

¹⁰³ CCC 2264

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- duty to use arms to protect them against unjust aggressors.¹⁰⁴
10. Our goal should be everlasting life with God when we die. If we reject God's laws we are committing spiritual suicide. We would be excluded from God's presence for eternity by our own actions.
 11. Murder or intentional killing is a grave sin. The sin is even graver when it is infanticide, fratricide, parricide, and the murder of a spouse because it breaks the natural bonds created by God.¹⁰⁵
 12. Exposing someone to grave danger or refusing to help someone in mortal danger is also a sin because it is contrary to the moral law.¹⁰⁶
 13. We must protect human life absolutely from the moment of conception.¹⁰⁷ The unborn have the same rights as persons who are born as attested to by God Himself; "*Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I dedicated you, a prophet to the nations I appointed you.*"¹⁰⁸ Therefore in terminating the life of the unborn we are interfering with God's plan of salvation.
 14. After the Angel Gabriel told The Virgin Mary that the power of the Most High will overshadow her and she will conceive and bear a son Jesus,¹⁰⁹ Mary visited her cousin Elizabeth who was already six months pregnant. When Mary greeted Elizabeth, "*the infant leaped in her womb,*" and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit.¹¹⁰
 15. Every procured abortion is morally evil and this has been the teaching of the Church since the first century.¹¹¹ Cooperation in an abortion constitutes a grave offense. God has allowed us to participate in creation through procreation but has not given us the right to terminate life. The Church attaches the penalty of excommunication to such a crime against human life.¹¹²
 16. Those who are sick or handicapped and lead weakened or diminished lives should receive support to help them lead lives as normal as possible. Euthanasia is not an option. We should not consider putting an end to a life to eliminate suffering either by a direct act or by an act of omission.¹¹³
 17. We are stewards of the life God entrusts to us and therefore we should preserve it for His honor and the salvation of our souls. Our natural inclination is to preserve and perpetuate our life. Therefore suicide goes against our natural inclination.¹¹⁴
 18. Jesus tells us, "You shall *love your neighbor* as yourself."¹¹⁵ First we need to love ourselves. If we love ourselves we will do no harm to ourselves. If we love our neighbor

¹⁰⁴ CCC 2265

¹⁰⁵ CCC 2268

¹⁰⁶ CCC 2269

¹⁰⁷ CCC 2270

¹⁰⁸ Jer. 1:5

¹⁰⁹ Lk. 1:26-35

¹¹⁰ Lk. 1:41

¹¹¹ CCC 2271

¹¹² CCC 2272

¹¹³ CCC 2276, 2277

¹¹⁴ CCC 2280, 2281

¹¹⁵ Mt. 19:19

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as we love ourselves we will do no harm to our neighbor.

19. Those suffering from grave psychological or emotional conditions may have diminished responsibility for committing suicide. However, if it is His will, God can provide the opportunity for repentance.¹¹⁶
20. The Commandment Thou Shall Not Kill does not limit to physical death. There are other ways to gravely harm someone that can lead directly or indirectly to death – Bullying, scandal, physical, emotional or psychological abuse, kidnapping, torture, human trafficking, and slavery.
21. Scandal is when we behave in a way that leads others to do evil – when we tempt others to sin.¹¹⁷ If we lead others to do wrong, we bear the responsibility for the evil that has been directly or indirectly encouraged. Jesus said, “*Whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a great millstone hung around his neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea.*”¹¹⁸
22. St. Paul writes in his epistle to the Romans that when men embrace their fallen nature and do not acknowledge God, their undiscerning minds allow them to do what is improper. They are filled with, “*Every form of wickedness, evil, greed, and malice; full of envy, murder, rivalry, treachery, and spite. They are gossips and scandalmongers and they hate God. They are insolent, haughty, boastful, ingenious in their wickedness, and rebellious toward their parents. They are senseless, faithless, heartless, ruthless.*”¹¹⁹
23. We must have respect for the spiritual wellbeing of others. When by our attitude or behavior we encourage others to do evil we commit scandal. Grave offences can lead to spiritual death. If through scandal we lead another to commit a grave offence, it is a grave offence on our part.¹²⁰
24. We must respect the life God gave us as well as our health and take reasonable care of them. The virtue of temperance disposes us to moderation so that we avoid excesses. For example, we should avoid the abuse of food, alcohol, tobacco, medicine or drugs. Acts that put our safety or the safety of others at risk should be avoided.¹²¹
25. Scientific, medical, or psychological experiments on human individuals or groups can contribute to healing the sick and the advancement of public health but such experiments cannot be contrary to the dignity of persons and to the moral law.¹²²
26. Acts such as kidnapping, hostage taking, terrorism, and physical or mental torture are morally wrong.¹²³
27. The dying should be given attention and care to help them live their last moments in dignity and peace.¹²⁴ The Church does not permit interference with the process of dying

¹¹⁶ CCC 2325

¹¹⁷ CCC 2284-2287

¹¹⁸ Mt. 18:6

¹¹⁹ Rom 1:29-31

¹²⁰ CCC 2284 - 2287

¹²¹ CCC 2288 - 2291

¹²² CCC 2292 - 2296

¹²³ CCC 2297 - 2298

¹²⁴ CCC 2299

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even if the person is in severe pain.¹²⁵

28. Voluntary organ donation is legitimate and cremation is permitted provided that it does not demonstrate a denial of faith in the resurrection of the body.¹²⁶

¹²⁵ CCC 2324

¹²⁶ CCC 2301

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6. YOU SHALL NOT COMMIT ADULTERY¹²⁷

1. Jesus said, *"You have heard that it was said, "You shall not commit adultery." But I say to you that every one who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart."*¹²⁸
2. Some Pharisees approached him, and tested him,⁴ saying, *"Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for any cause whatever?"* He said in reply, *"Have you not read that from the beginning the Creator made them male and female and said, 'For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh'? So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore, what God has joined together, no human being must separate."*¹²⁹
3. God created us in His own image, created us male and female, and blessed us with the honor, power, and responsibility of participating in the creation of life.¹³⁰
4. God gave man and woman equal personal dignity.¹³¹ Neither was the property of the other.
5. The tradition of the Church has understood the sixth commandment as encompassing the whole of human sexuality.¹³²
6. Our sexuality affects the unity of body and soul – the human and divine, the bonds of communion we form with others, and our capacity to love and procreate.¹³³
7. Our sexuality is naturally ordered to the good of spouses and the generation and education of children.¹³⁴
8. Sexuality is ordered to the conjugal love of man and woman. Marriage bonds between baptized persons are sanctified by the sacrament.¹³⁵
9. Sexuality is not something simply biological, but concerns the innermost being of the human person.¹³⁶
10. Chastity is the virtue that can prevent or moderate giving in to the sexual appetite based on our state in life.¹³⁷
11. All the baptized are called to lead a chaste life in keeping with their particular states of life in the same way that Christ did.¹³⁸
12. Adultery refers to marital infidelity. When two partners, of whom at least one is married

¹²⁷ Ex. 20:14; Deut. 5:18

¹²⁸ Mt. 5:27-28

¹²⁹ Mt. 19:3-6

¹³⁰ Gen 1:27-28

¹³¹ CCC 2334

¹³² CCC 2336

¹³³ CCC 2332; Gaudium Et Spes 49:2

¹³⁴ CCC 2353

¹³⁵ CCC 2360

¹³⁶ CCC 2361

¹³⁷ CCC 2337

¹³⁸ CCC 2348; Gal. 3:27

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- to another party, have sexual relations they commit adultery.¹³⁹
13. Jesus condemns even the desire that can lead us to commit adultery; “*Everyone who looks at a woman with lust has already committed adultery with her in is heart.*”¹⁴⁰
 14. When adultery is committed, it damages the bond of marriage, breaks the marriage contract/vows (covenant) and infringes upon the rights of the other spouse. It undermines the institution of marriage by breaking the contract on which it is based, and it compromises procreation and the welfare of children who need their parents’ stable union.¹⁴¹ It can also compromise the physical health of not only the one breaking the contract but also the innocent partner.
 15. Adultery can lead to civil divorce, which is a grave offense against the natural law. Divorce claims to break the contract, to which the spouses freely consented, to live with each other till death.¹⁴²
 16. Jesus said that God’s original intention was that marriage could not be dissolved by any human power or for any reason other than death.¹⁴³
 17. Contracting a new union, even if it is recognized by civil law, adds to the gravity of the rupture: the remarried spouse is then in a situation of public and permanent adultery.¹⁴⁴
 18. Divorce is immoral also because it introduces disorder into the family and into society.¹⁴⁵
 19. One of the spouses may be the innocent victim of a civil divorce; that spouse has not contravened the moral law.¹⁴⁶
 20. There is a considerable difference between a spouse who has sincerely tried to be faithful to the sacrament of marriage and is unjustly abandoned, and one who through his/her own grave fault destroys a canonically valid marriage.
 21. The separation of spouses while maintaining the marriage bond can be legitimate in certain cases provided for by canon law.¹⁴⁷
 22. If civil divorce remains the only possible way of ensuring certain legal rights, the care of the children, or the protection of inheritance, it can be tolerated and does not constitute a moral offense.¹⁴⁸
 23. Those who are engaged to marry are called to refrain from sexual intercourse. They should reserve for marriage the expressions of affection that belong to married love.¹⁴⁹
 24. Human love does not tolerate "trial marriages." It demands a total and definitive gift of persons to one another. Trial marriages are morally illegitimate.¹⁵⁰

¹³⁹ CCC 2380

¹⁴⁰ Mt. 5:27-28

¹⁴¹ CCC 2381

¹⁴² CCC 2384

¹⁴³ Mt 5:31-32; 19:3-9; Mk 10 9; Lk. 16:18; 1 Cor. 7:10-11

¹⁴⁴ CCC 2384

¹⁴⁵ CCC 2385

¹⁴⁶ CCC 2386

¹⁴⁷ CCC 2383

¹⁴⁸ CCC 2383

¹⁴⁹ CCC 2350

¹⁵⁰ CCC 2391

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25. In a so-called free union, a man and a woman will engage in sexual intimacy while refusing to enter into the sacrament of matrimony. The partners make no commitment to one another¹⁵¹
26. Sexual pleasure is morally disordered when sought for itself outside of marriage and is not for the purpose of procreation.
27. Lust is disordered desire for or inordinate enjoyment of sexual pleasure. Sexual pleasure is morally disordered when sought for itself, isolated from procreation.¹⁵²
28. By masturbation is to be understood the deliberate stimulation of the genital organs in order to derive sexual pleasure.¹⁵³
29. Fornication is carnal union between an unmarried man and an unmarried woman. It is gravely contrary to the dignity of persons and of human sexuality which is naturally ordered to the good of spouses and the generation and education of children.¹⁵⁴
30. Incest designates intimate relations between relatives or in-laws within a degree that prohibits marriage between them.¹⁵⁵ St Paul states that this is immoral.¹⁵⁶ Incest corrupts family relationships and marks a regression toward animalism.¹⁵⁷
31. Sexual abuse perpetrated by adults on children or adolescents entrusted to their care is morally wrong.¹⁵⁸
32. Pornography consists in removing real or simulated sexual acts from the intimacy of the partners, in order to display them deliberately to third parties.¹⁵⁹
33. Prostitution does injury to the dignity of the person who engages in it, reducing the person to an instrument of sexual pleasure.¹⁶⁰
34. Rape is the forcible violation of the sexual intimacy of another person. It does injury to justice and charity.¹⁶¹
35. Homosexuality refers to relations between men or between women who experience an exclusive or predominant sexual attraction toward persons of the same sex. Sacred Scripture presents homosexual acts as acts of grave depravity.¹⁶²
36. Tradition has always declared, "homosexual acts are intrinsically disordered." They are contrary to the natural law. They close the sexual act to the gift of life. Under no circumstances can they be approved.¹⁶³

¹⁵¹ CCC 2390

¹⁵² CCC 2351

¹⁵³ CCC 2352

¹⁵⁴ CCC 2353

¹⁵⁵ Lev 18:7-20

¹⁵⁶ 1 Cor.5:1, 4-5

¹⁵⁷ CCC 2388

¹⁵⁸ CCC 2389

¹⁵⁹ CCC 2354

¹⁶⁰ CCC 2355

¹⁶¹ CCC 2356

¹⁶² CCC 2356; Gen 19:1-29; Rom 12:4-27; 1 Cor 6:10; 1 Tim 1:10

¹⁶³ Persona Humana VIII

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37. Homosexual persons are called to chastity.¹⁶⁴

¹⁶⁴ CCC 2359

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7. YOU SHALL NOT STEAL¹⁶⁵

1. Mankind is to be the steward of the goods of the earth for the common good in a spirit of brotherly love.¹⁶⁶
2. The goods of creation are for the whole human race to enjoy by the fruit of their labor.¹⁶⁷ The right to private property does not abolish the universal destination of goods.¹⁶⁸
3. The only time appropriation of goods is legitimate in the eyes of the Church is if they are needed to guarantee a person's freedom and dignity or helping them to meet their basic needs, i.e. food, water, shelter, clothing etc.¹⁶⁹ However, the rights of others must be respected and penalties under civil law could be imposed.
4. The seventh commandment prohibits directly or indirectly unjustly taking or keeping the goods of one's neighbor against his will, and wronging him in any way with respect to his goods is forbidden.¹⁷⁰
5. Even if no civil laws are broken, unjustly taking and keeping the property of others is against this commandment not to steal. So keeping goods that were loaned or lost, business fraud; paying unjust wages; forcing up prices by taking advantage of the ignorance or hardship of another are all examples of violations of the seventh commandment.¹⁷¹
6. Reparation for injustice committed against the seventh commandment requires the restitution of stolen goods to their owner.¹⁷²
7. Morally just business promises and contracts should be adhered to and executed in good faith.¹⁷³
8. Political authority has the right and duty to regulate the legitimate exercise of the right to ownership for the sake of the common good.¹⁷⁴
9. "Games of chance (card games, etc.) or wagers are not in themselves contrary to justice. They become morally unacceptable when they deprive someone of what is necessary to provide for his needs and those of others. Unfair wagers and cheating at games constitute grave matter, unless the damage inflicted is so slight that the one who suffers it cannot reasonably consider it significant."¹⁷⁵

¹⁶⁵ Ex. 20:15; Deut. 5:19, CCC 2450-2463

¹⁶⁶ Gen 1:26-29

¹⁶⁷ CCC 2459

¹⁶⁸ CCC 2452

¹⁶⁹ CCC 2402, 2408

¹⁷⁰ CCC 2401, 2453

¹⁷¹ CCC 2409

¹⁷² Lk 19:8

¹⁷³ CCC 2410

¹⁷⁴ CCC 2406

¹⁷⁵ CCC 2413

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8. YOU SHALL NOT BEAR FALSE WITNESS AGAINST YOUR NEIGHBOR¹⁷⁶

In explaining the Beatitudes¹⁷⁷ Jesus said, “Do not take a false oath.”¹⁷⁸

In the Gospel of John Jesus prayed that His Disciples might be consecrated in truth.¹⁷⁹ Jesus prays to the Father for all who believe in Him and so we, as followers of Christ, are now bound to speak the truth always so that we may be brought to perfection in Him.¹⁸⁰

1. “God is the source of all truth. His Word is truth. His Law is truth.” We are made in the image of God therefore we are called to live in the truth.¹⁸¹
2. The Gospel of John tells us of our Savior Jesus Christ; “The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us, and we saw his glory, the glory as of the Father’s only Son, full of grace and truth.”¹⁸² Jesus is the way to the eternal life and we have to come to Jesus in truth.¹⁸³ We are disciples of Jesus and Jesus tells us in the Gospel of Matthew to speak the truth, to simply “Let your ‘Yes’ mean ‘Yes,’ and your ‘No’ mean ‘No.’ Anything more is from the evil one.”¹⁸⁴
3. We are required to be truthful for our own integrity. Truth promotes trust and understanding among people. It would be difficult for us to live among each other if we were not truthful to one another.¹⁸⁵
4. If we say we are Christians, then we must follow Jesus’ example and live in Truth.¹⁸⁶ Our lives must be an example of truth.¹⁸⁷
5. In his letter to the Ephesians St. Paul writes, “Therefore, putting away falsehood, speak the truth, each one to his neighbor, for we are members one of another.”¹⁸⁸ We should not speak untruths about others or perjure ourselves if under oath since that is gravely injuring someone. Such falsehoods when under oath can “contribute to condemnation of the innocent, exoneration of the guilty, or the increased punishment of the accused.”¹⁸⁹
6. A lie is always bad in itself. Lies can never be told even for good intentions or reasons.
7. Other examples of actions contrary to truth are; rash judgments, unfounded suspicions, detractions (disclosing someone’s faults and failings), calumny (harming the reputation of others), tale bearing, and telling secrets we are bound to keep.¹⁹⁰

¹⁷⁶ Ex. 20:16; Deut. 5:20

¹⁷⁷ Mt 5:3-11

¹⁷⁸ Mt 5:33

¹⁷⁹ Jn 17:17-19

¹⁸⁰ Jn 17:20-24

¹⁸¹ CCC 2465

¹⁸² Jn 1:14; CCC 2466

¹⁸³ Jn 14:6, CCC 2466

¹⁸⁴ Mt 5:37; CCC 2466

¹⁸⁵ CCC 2469

¹⁸⁶ CCC 2470

¹⁸⁷ CCC 2472

¹⁸⁸ Eph 4:25

¹⁸⁹ CCC 2476

¹⁹⁰ CCC 2477-2479

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8. “The gravity of a lie is measured against the nature of the truth it deforms, the circumstances, the intentions of the one who lies, and the harm suffered by its victims. If a lie in itself only constitutes a venial sin, it becomes mortal when it does grave injury to the virtues of justice and charity.”¹⁹¹
9. Reparation must be made publicly or privately for all harm done by actions that are contrary to truth.¹⁹²
10. Love and respect should dictate how we communicate with others.

¹⁹¹ CCC 2484

¹⁹² CCC 2487

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

9. YOU SHALL NOT COVET YOUR NEIGHBOR'S WIFE¹⁹³

1. Jesus said, "I say to you, everyone who looks at a woman with lust has already committed adultery with her in his heart."¹⁹⁴
2. When our desire for someone's wife or property is stronger than our reason or self control then we are coveting.
3. We are required to be pure of thought, pure of heart, and to practice the virtue of temperance – self-control.¹⁹⁵
4. "Purification of the heart demands prayer, the practice of chastity, purity of intention and of vision."¹⁹⁶
5. Temperance is one of the four cardinal virtues – Prudence, Justice and Fortitude are the other three moral virtues
6. "Purification of the heart demands prayer, the practice of chastity, purity of intention and of vision."¹⁹⁷

¹⁹³ Ex. 20:17; Deut. 5:21

¹⁹⁴ Mt 5:28

¹⁹⁵ Mt 5:8; CCC 2530

¹⁹⁶ CCC 2532

¹⁹⁷ CCC 2532

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

10. YOU SHALL NOT COVET YOUR NEIGHBOR'S GOODS¹⁹⁸

1. We are required to be satisfied with what is ours
2. We are required to respect the possessions of others
3. We are forbidden from greed, avarice, envy
4. We are forbidden from unjustly obtaining things that do not belong to us¹⁹⁹

¹⁹⁸ Ex. 20:17; Deut. 5:21

¹⁹⁹ CCC 2534-2536