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Volume VIII

The Commandments of God: Part I.

“If you have any love for Me, you must keep the Commandments which I give you.” (John 14:15). So says Our Lord.

Just as the Creed is a compendium of faith, so the Ten Commandments of God are a compendium of morals. They are an explicit statement of the natural laws of Truth, Order, and Justice. Because God made them for all men of all time they must be holy, just, and unchangeable. They are a light on the pilgrimage of men through the dark valley of this life of trial, and, if observed, they will bring happiness even this side of the grave. It is not sufficient only to believe God’s revelation, we must also do what He tells us. If men would only do this, most of the troubles with which they find themselves afflicted would be at an end. The Ten Commandments, in their briefest form, are as follows:

1. I am the Lord, Thy God, thou shalt not have strange gods before Me.
2. Thou shalt not take the Name of the Lord, Thy God, in vain.
3. Remember thou keep holy the Sabbath day.
4. Honor thy father and thy mother.
5. Thou shalt not kill.
6. Thou shalt not commit adultery.
7. Thou shalt not steal.
8. Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.
9. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor’s wife.
10. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor’s goods.

Protestants divide the First Commandment into two parts, and join the Ninth and the Tenth Commandments into One. Since the Ten Commandments represent God’s law for all men, they are possible for all men. God could not make laws that would not be possible for men to observe. Moreover, God always gives graces necessary to observe His Ten Commandments. Not only is it



possible for all men to observe them, it is necessary and obligatory for them to do so. Therefore, they have the obligation to know them.

The story of God giving the Ten Commandments to Moses can be read in the Book of Exodus, chapter 19. It was fifty days after the passage of the Red Sea on Mt. Sinai in Arabia after the three days preparation by the people and amid thunder and lightening. The Ten Commandments given to Moses were ratified by Jesus Christ. “Do not think that I have come to set aside the law and the prophets.” He said, “I have not come to set them aside, but to bring them to perfection.”(Matt. 5:17).

*“ Jesus,
my God, I
love Thee
above all
things.”*

“The First Commandment”

The first Commandment enjoins the worship of God by Faith, Hope, Charity, and Religion. It commands us to believe firmly in God and His word, to learn what He has taught us, and to profess our belief. It bids us also to trust or hope in God, love Him, and adore Him by prayer and sacrifice.

“Sins against Faith”

Therefore, all false forms of religion—all those not established by God—are forbidden. It is obviously wrong to maintain, that religions established by men with no divine authority or mission, are equal to that established by God. One religion is not as good as another. When it is certain that God has revealed something to us, it is sinful to doubt it willfully or to disbelieve it. That disbelief is rebellion against God arising from pride. One cannot pick and choose one’s beliefs: everything revealed by God must be accepted. Moreover, men have the duty to find out what God has revealed. Ignorance of religion is one of the greatest evils of the modern world; even many Catholics are not innocent in this matter. All have the duty of knowing their religion. If ignorance is due to one’s own fault or neglect, it is sinful, and if serious, it would be mortally sinful.

Faith is man’s greatest gift. If he loses it, he loses his greatest treasure and experience proves that, once lost, the gift of Faith seldom returns. Willfully to expose oneself to the danger of losing the Faith would be grievously sinful. We expose ourselves to the danger of losing the Faith by: a). Neglecting our spiritual duties. A machine left idle will rust and become useless. The Sacraments are the source of grace; Holy Communion is the food of the soul. Neglect of the Sacraments, especially Holy Communion, means the soul is spiritually starved. b). Reading bad books. Bad books include those against religion and morality. These are very common nowadays, especially novels describing immorality in a verbal way. Parents should be particularly careful in safeguarding their children against bad reading. Magazines and newspapers are far from innocent in this matter. c). Going to non-Catholic schools. This does not only mean Protestant schools but all schools where erroneous doctrine against the true Faith is taught, and also those in which no religion is taught. In such places, there is no true Catholic atmosphere and an essential element—the most important element—in

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education is lacking, i.e., the teaching of our duties toward our Creator. d). Taking part in the services or prayers of a false religion. Protestants usually believe that all religions are as good as one another, that the different denominations are all branches of Christ's Church. Hence, they should have no objection to attending Catholic services. But Catholics believe that their own Church, is the only one founded by God Himself and that all others are false. Hence it would be illogical of them to attend services held by ministers of false religions. If anyone wishes to attend a service in a Protestant church for a sufficient reason; i.e., the marriage of a close friend or relative, he must take no part in the service. If there is a doubt as to the sufficiency of the reason or the possibility of a scandal, the priest should be consulted beforehand.

“Sins against Hope”

It is possible to sin against Hope by excess and by defect, that is, by presumption or by despair. Presumption means a rash expectation of salvation without taking the proper means to it, e.g., those who continue to live in mortal sin hoping for a death-bed repentance or those who trust in their own efforts to save their souls without the grace of God. The latter means distrust of obtaining salvation and the means to it. Both despair and presumption are grievous sins against the Holy Ghost. The great example of despair was Judas Iscariot (whom it led to suicide), and the presumption of St. Peter (whom it led to denying Our Lord).

*“ Hail
Precious
Blood
streaming
from the
wounds of
my
crucified
Lord
Jesus
Christ.
washing
away the
sins of the
whole
world.”*

“ Sins against Religion”

The chief sins against religion are the worship of false gods or idols and the giving to any creature whatsoever, the honor that belongs to God alone. Complete idolatry is not common in civilized countries nowadays, but one of the most frequent sins is interpretative idolatry or an inordinate love of creatures, which prevents perfect love of God.

The first Commandment does not forbid the making of statues. There are several examples from Scripture of the lawful use of images of angels in the Jewish Tabernacle, the Brazen Serpent, the adornment of the walls of the Temple. (c.f. Exodus 25:18; Numbers 21:8; III Kings 6:29). The early Christians had their images and holy pictures in the catacombs. Statues and holy pictures teach or recall important truths or the example of holy men; they catch and fix attention and holy devotion.

All dealing with the devil is, of course, clearly against the first Commandment. So are Spiritualism, consulting fortune-tellers, trusting to charms, omens, dreams, and all other superstitious practices.

“Spiritualism”

Spiritualism is condemned in Scripture: “Let there be not found among you anyone that consults pythonic spirits.” (Deut.18:11). Those who practice it are



often animated by far from supernatural motives and find it a lucrative profession. It gives great scope for trickery and for deceit by the devil. Physical evils—even insanity—sometimes follow indulgence in necromancy.

God alone knows the future; mercifully He has hidden it from us. To consult fortune-tellers is wrong; even if it is done for amusement, it is sinful amusement and may give scandal.

“Sacrilege”

Sacrilege means the violent or irreverent treatment of what is consecrated to God. It is of three kinds depending on whether it is the violation of a sacred person, place, or thing. Of its nature, sacrilege is a mortal sin, although it may become venial through smallness of matter, lack of deliberation, or some other cause. We ought always to practice reverence and obedience for God’s specially chosen and anointed ministers, as for all those consecrated to God and for everything which pertains especially to His service. Our conduct in Church should be worthy of the House of God.

“Simony”

Simony, named after Simon Magus, who tried to buy spiritual power from St. Peter (Acts 8:18), means the buying or selling of spiritual things for a temporal price or reward. Offerings made on the occasion of spiritual favors and not in payment for them are not simony; e.g., Mass stipends, offerings on the occasion of baptism, marriages, etc. These are meant to be contributions towards the upkeep of the clergy, who are dependent on the offerings of the people, and also to provide for the necessities of the public worship of God. It is customary for Catholics to support their priests in this way, for thereby, they merit special blessings for themselves.

In order to guide people and to prevent abuses in regard to Mass stipends, many diocese have standardized the amount it is usual to offer although, of course, there is no question of the performance of a spiritual work being conditional on a certain offering being forthcoming. Priests do not sell Masses nor do people pay for Masses. The Mass cannot be sold, but its offering supposes the outward necessities, bread, wine, candles, vestments, and a person specially authorized to offer the Mass in the name of Christ and the Church. The Mass offering is a contribution towards these external necessities and especially towards the upkeep of the priest who stands at the altar on behalf of the people. When a Catholic gives a Mass stipend, the Mass is applied according to his intention.

Catholics honor angels and saints, but not with divine honor. As the special friends of God, they are worthy of special honor, but only of an inferior honor befitting them as creatures, infinitely inferior below the Creator. The practice of thus honoring them is very ancient. It is not forbidden by any Commandment; it is useful, for the saints are our friends and God’s friends, filled with charity

*“Lord
Jesus,
purify my
heart and
my soul
with the
shower of
Thy most
Precious
Blood.”*



towards us and towards God. The best way to honor the saints is to imitate their virtues.

Relics, crucifixes, and holy pictures are honored, not for their own sake, nor for their intrinsic value, but because they relate to those who are worthy of honor. Even in worldly affairs, men honor the memorials of the great and prize their possessions. Of course, we do not pray to relics or images, for they can neither see, hear, nor help us.

(Taken from *This is the Faith* by Francis J. Ripley; Published by Catechetical Guild Educational Society. St. Paul, Minn.; *Nihil Obstat & Imprimatur* Given January 25, 1951)



*Sermon by Fr. Martin Stepanich O.F.M.; Prayer; Part VIII;
“ But Deliver Us from Evil”*

At the conclusion of the Our Father, we make a heart-felt plea: “But deliver us from evil.”

With these words we beg God to deliver us from any evil that may have befallen us, but we also ask Him to protect us against any evil that might threaten us. There is moral evil, and by this we mean sin. And there is physical evil, and by this we usually mean any other evil besides sin.

Physical evil includes such things as pain and suffering, fatigue and exhaustion, injury and danger, sickness and death. But by physical evil we also mean the various causes and factors that bring on suffering and terror and death, such as: exhausting labor and disease, accidents and catastrophes, wars and fires, floods, tornadoes, earthquakes, and so on, almost without end. These are all consequences of original sin.

We know, of course, that we can never be completely free from physical evils in this life, yet we still beg God to spare us as much as possible in this regard. And we realize that we must be humbly resigned to God’s most holy and adorable will and to His all-wise decisions in regard to us.

It is very consoling to know that physical evils can help us to become better persons. They can bring out the very best that is in man. Physical evils help us develop strength and nobility of character, courage, fidelity, patience, and charity, as well as other virtues. Best of all it is the fact that physical evils can help us acquire rich merits for eternity and everlasting praise and glory before God and His angels and saints.

So, even though we rightly fear physical evils and beg God to protect us from them, still we want to take the best advantage of them and capitalize on them for our own eternal good.

Then, too, we know that the physical evils of this life will not last forever, but will come to an end one day. In the end, we will receive that precious gift

“Blessed and praised for evermore be Jesus, who hath saved us by His Blood.”



of freedom from suffering which Adam lost for us in Paradise. It will be given to us at last on Judgement Day, the day of the resurrection of the body.

But the evil that we must dread most of all is moral evil and by that, we mean sin. May God deliver us from the evil of sin. Physical evil can hurt the body, even destroy it, but it cannot touch the immortal soul and it cannot keep us out of Heaven. But moral evil, on the other hand, can badly hurt the soul, even destroy the supernatural life in it, and it can close to us the gates of Heaven forever. That is the main reason, then, why we beg God to deliver us from evil.

We further beg God to deliver us from the power of the Evil One, who tries to lead us into sin—the devil. We must never be so foolish as to live and act and talk as if there were no devil. We must never consider the devil as only a joke or as a strong cuss word. What a favor we do the devil when we do not take him seriously!

Actually, the devil cannot hurt us at all unless we allow him to do so, that is, by yielding to his temptations and by falling for his many tricks. What we should do is to beg God to deliver us from our own stupidity and insanity whereby we give ourselves over to the power of the Evil One through sin.

We also petition God to deliver us from all those who do the works of the devil, who try to lead us astray by their bad example and seductions.

We beg the Almighty to deliver us from all the evil movements of the day and you know that the worst of these is godless, that creeping monster of deceit and treachery which seduces and blinds men with talk of peace. It speaks of peaceful co-existence. It pretends to seek peace at any price. May God deliver us from the evils of Communism!

And, finally, we plead with God to deliver us from the everlasting abode of the Evil One and of all the damned. It is so heartrending to see so many rushing headlong and unconcerned, even jokingly and with gay abandon, towards the abyss of hell. If they would only realize what an unspeakably frightful place it is. Hell is dreadfully real!

God will deliver us from all these evils, but only with our cooperation. As St. Augustine put it so well, God did indeed create us without our cooperation, but He will not save us or deliver us from evil without our cooperation.

(Given in the Chicago area, March 8, 1964)

*“Eternal
Father, I
offer Thee
the merits of
the Precious
Blood of
Jesus, Thy
well-beloved
Son, my
Savior and
my God, for
the
repentance
of
unbelievers,
the
uprooting of
heresy, and
the
conversion
of poor
sinners.”*



The Commandments of God: Part II.

“The Second Commandment”

The second Commandment is a natural sequel to the first. Scripture enjoins reverence for the Name of God in other places also: “O, Lord, how terrible is Thy name.”(Ps. 8:1). “Holy and terrible is His Name.” (Ps. 110:9).

It is clearly implied that due reverence must always be used in speaking of God and all holy persons and things. The mere thought of the relationship existing between the Creator and the creature should be sufficient reminder of this. Oaths and vows are forms of speech having special reference to God.

An oath is calling God to witness the truth of what we say. We swear only when we take an oath. “Thou shalt swear in truth, and in judgment and in justice.” (Jer, 4:2). It is lawful to take an oath only when God’s honor, or our own, or our neighbor’s good requires it. We must believe that what we swear is true; we should only swear when there is a good reason for doing so, and after careful reflection and with discretion. The thing sworn to and our intention in swearing must be honest. False, rash and unnecessary oaths are, of course, forbidden.

A vow is a promise to God, binding oneself to do some good. For a vow to be lawful, it must be a true promise (not just a resolution) made with full knowledge, freedom and deliberation to God to do something more perfect than what we are already doing, and morally possible. Persons who enter the religious orders in the Catholic Church usually take three vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience. Those who wish to be released from vows must apply for a dispensation to the competent authority.

Blaspheming, cursing and profane words are forbidden by the Second Commandment. Blasphemy is any thought, word, desire or act insulting God. In itself it is gravely wrong, and history gives many examples of how God has punished it.

Cursing means praying for evil on ourselves or any of God’s creatures. It is directly opposed to the love of God and the object of the Incarnation—the salvation of all men. When the evil prayed for grievous and adverted to, or when the habit is continual, cursing is a mortal sin.

We use profane words when we speak in a light or jocular way of God or holy things. Much language of today comes under this heading, e.g., the frequent use of the word “hell”. Catholics would do well to remember that they very easily give scandal by the careless use of bad language. It is one of the things most noted by non-Catholics, who are far less particular about other and more serious matters. We should, therefore, always be particularly careful in this matter and practice the virtue of reverence for God and all sacred persons, places and things.

*“ Eternal
Father, I
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Blood of
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well-beloved
Son, my
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my God, for
all my
relations,
friends and
enemies, for
the poor, the
sick, and the
afflicted, and
for all those
for whom
Thou, my
God,
knowest That
I ought to
pray, or
wouldst have
me pray.”*



“The Third Commandment”

The third Commandment, the only one emphasized by the word “Remember”, refers to the “Sabbath.” When Moses received the Commandments from God, he was told to keep holy “the Sabbath”, that is, the rest-day, not necessarily Saturday or any particular day. The Jews decided it should be the last day of the week; but the Apostles of Christ chose the first day of the week because so many events of crucial importance for Christianity happened on the first day of the week—the Resurrection, the Descent of the Holy Ghost, the conferring on the Apostles by Christ of the power to forgive sins in His Name.

We are to keep Sundays holy by attending the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass and resting from servile works. Later, the reader will learn how the Mass is the greatest act of the Catholic Faith and that, therefore, the Church has decreed that this command of God can only be fulfilled by those who worship Him by the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass on Sundays. That point will be dealt with under the first Commandment of the Church; for it is the Church which interprets the Commands of God and gives us details of how they are to be observed.

At present, we must remember that God’s command is to keep the Sunday holy. Mass and abstinence from servile works are only two ways of doing this. One who merely goes to Mass and forgets about God for the rest of the day can scarcely be said to be keeping Sunday holy, although he may avoid mortal sin. So it is that the Church urges all to attend the other services which she provides for them, such as Rosary, Vespers, Instruction, Benediction, and also to devote some time to pious or religious reading or other exercises for the sanctification of the soul. Every Catholic should, for example, maintain his interest in the Church through reading Catholic newspapers, periodicals and magazines. To do this on Sunday will be helpful toward keeping the day holy.

“The Fourth Commandment”

The fourth Commandment bids us love, respect, reverence and obey our parents and other lawful superiors in all that is not sin.

If we are commanded to love all men, how much more should we love our parents to whom we owe so much. Such love corresponds to the most natural feeling of the heart. In practice, parents should receive from their children, affection, thanks, good wishes, consideration, prayers, kindness in thought, word and deed, material help in their needs, continual reverence and hearty, prompt, and exact obedience. We are commanded to obey, not only our parents, but also our bishops and pastors, the civil authorities and our lawful superiors in all that is not sin.

*“ Eternal
Father, I
offer Thee
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the Precious
Blood of
Jesus, Thy
well-beloved
Son, my
Savior and
my God, for
all those who
this day are
passing to
the other
life; that
Thou
wouldst save
them from
the pains of
hell. And
admit them
quickly to the
possession of
Thy eternal
glory.”*



Bishops and pastors are spiritual parents, since they beget the life of grace in the soul; they hold the place of God, who speaks through them. “Fear the Lord,” says God, “and reverence the priests.” (Eccu.7:31). St. Paul is referring to priests when he urges the Hebrews: “Obey those who have charge of you, and yield to their will; they are keeping unwearied watch over your souls because they know they will have an account to give. Make it a grateful task for them; it is your own loss if they find it a laborious effort.” (Heb.13:17).

Writing to the Romans, St. Paul also enjoins obedience to the civil authorities. “Every soul must be submissive to its lawful superiors; authority comes from God only, and all authorities that hold sway are of his ordinance. The man who opposes authority is a rebel against the ordinance of God...the magistrate is God’s minister...Thou must needs, then, be submissive, not only for fear of punishment, but in conscience. It is for the same reason that you pay taxes...Pay every man, then, his due; taxes, if it be taxes, customs. If it be customs; respect and honor, if it be respect and honor.” (Rom. 13:1-8).

We are bound to assist our parents in their spiritual and temporal needs—respectfully advising them, bringing the priest to them, warning them in case of sickness or death, praying for them after death. In poverty, we should, if possible, procure for them the necessities of life; in sickness we should visit them; in old age we should remember how they supported us in infancy, and after death we should faithfully carry out their last wishes.

According to the fourth Commandment, we are also bound in justice to support our pastors. “You know, surely, that those who do the work of the temple, live on the temple’s revenues.” Says St. Paul, “that those who preside at the altar share the altar’s offerings. And so it is that the Lord has bidden he heralds of the Gospel live by preaching the Gospel.” (I Cor.9:14).

From the duties of inferiors to superiors, we turn to the duties of superiors, to inferiors. The duties of parents towards their children, is to provide for them, to instruct and correct them, and give them a good Catholic education. The family is the basic unit of society; parents are heads of the family. Therefore, the welfare of society depends on how parents acquit themselves of their duties. Parents are strictly bound to provide for their children: 1. Life. Mothers must take due care of their children before birth as well as afterwards. 2. Food and clothing according to their needs. 3. Home. To make them happy, according to their means—which includes shelter and care in sickness and misfortune. 4. A state of life by giving their children due training and by fostering a religious vocation if present. 5. Adequate provision for the future by making a will.

Parents are strictly bound to instruct their children: they are the first and principal educators of the little ones. Efforts of priests and teachers will be of little avail without the help of the parents. School is meant to be a supplement for the home, not a substitute for it. The most important instruction is a child’s duty to God. This is the sacred privilege and responsibility of the

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Father, I
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of the
Precious
Blood of
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my God,
for all
those who
love this
treasure,
for those
who join
me in
adoring it,
and for
those who
strive to
spread
devotion to
it.”*



“ Eternal Father, I offer Thee the merits of the Precious Blood of Jesus, Thy well-beloved Son, my Savior and my God for all my wants, spiritual and temporal; in suffrage for the holy souls in purgatory, and chiefly for those who were most devout lovers of this Blood, the price of our redemption, and of the sorrows and pains of our dear Mother, most holy Mary.”

parents. Words, threats of punishment will be quite useless without the example of parents. The home must be the child’s first school of fervor. There he must be taught to love God and hater sin, to say his prayers and to practice his Faith by regular attendance at Mass and frequent reception of the Sacraments. He must be safeguarded from all evil influence from outside the home—books, films, companions, amusements, etc. “If anyone hurts the conscience of one of these little ones that believe in Me, it would be better for him if he had been drowned in the depths of the sea, with a millstone hung about his neck.” (Matt.18:6).

Parents are strictly bound to correct their children in justice; in prudence. “He that loveth his son frequently chastiseth him.” (Eccu. 30:9). “Give thy son his way, and he shall make thee afraid,” (Eccu.30:2).

Parents are strictly bound to give their children a good Catholic education. To educate their children is a most serious obligation of parents, and they must assist the teachers in every way. It is a natural duty for parents to love their children, and they cannot be said to do this if they neglect to pray for their children.

Under this Commandment also comes the prohibition to join parties or secret societies, which plot against the Church or the State and also, those which, by reason of their secrecy, are condemned by the Church. Among these would be the Freemasons and the Odd Fellows. The Freemasons are really a body professing a false religion. The “Universal Manuel of Freemasons” defines it as “the activity of closely united men who, employing symbolical forms borrowed principally from the mason’s trade and from architecture, work for the welfare of mankind, striving morally to ennoble themselves and others and thereby to bring about a universal league of mankind, which they aspire to exhibit even now on a small scale,” It is essentially naturalism and is therefore absolutely opposed to Christianity, which is essentially supernaturalism.

The Church does not condemn any society merely because it is secret; but she condemns secret societies when she knows that the obligation of secrecy is being misused. A Catholic may not join the Odd Fellows, although that society does not fall under so strict a condemnation as the Freemasonry. The Church forbids her children to be Communists because Communism is fundamentally materialistic, atheistic, anti-Christian, anti-God and opposed to the fundamental rights of man and the basic principles of society. It restricts, for instance, the right to private property, sanctioned by natural law and the positive law of God; it takes away every true incentive to self-development and progress; it destroys liberty; it breaks up the family; it is unjust totalitarianism.



“The Fifth Commandment”

“ Eternal Father, we offer Thee the most Precious Blood of Jesus, shed for us with such great love and bitter pain from His right hand; and through the merits and the efficacy of that Blood, we entreat Thy Divine Majesty to grant us Thy holy benediction, in order that we may be defended thereby from all our enemies, and be set free from every ill; while we say, May the blessing of Almighty God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, descend upon us and remain with us for ever.”

The fifth Commandment is “Thou shalt not Kill”. Without it there would be no security for the life of man, either for his physical life or for his spiritual life. Life is man’s greatest good, so God wishes to safeguard it against attack. God alone is the Author of life; He alone may take life, apart from the circumstances of a just war; the execution of a criminal and legitimate self-defense. The Fifth Commandment forbids: a). Willful murder: one of the sins crying to heaven for vengeance because it usurps God’s right over life, destroys one whom God made to His own image and likeness, robs him of his most precious possession, and sends a soul into eternity unprepared. b). Abortion: willful murder committed before a child’s birth, often disguised as “termination of pregnancy”. It deprives a child of heaven forever. It is punished by the Church with excommunication. c). Suicide: willful self-murder—a crime against God. d). Immoderate use of alcohol or other excuses, such as gluttony, which tend to shorten one’s life. e). Exposing one’s life or health to unnecessary danger without sufficient cause. f). Fighting: opposed to the law of charity. g). Quarreling: tends to fighting and even murder. h). Injurious words: leads to quarrels and their consequences. “Any man who says to his brother, ‘Thou fool, must answer for it in hell fire.” (Matt.5:22). Christ Himself said that. I). Scandal: any word, deed, omission, wrong or act seeming to be wrong, and leading to sin. Those who give bad example to those under them, such as parents who curse and quarrel before their children, those who by their behavior teach or suggest evil, those who ridicule piety in others, those who counsel others to do evil, and those who provoke others to sin are guilty of malicious scandal. Another name for it is “soul murder”. What a terrible sin! Even murder of the body is one of the sins crying to heaven for vengeance. Scandal is undoing the work of Christ, who came to save all men, and doing the work of the devil. “Woe to the world for the hurt done to the consciences,” said Our Lord, and, “If anyone hurt the conscience of one of these little ones, that believeth in Me, he had better have been drowned in the depth of the sea, with a millstone hung about his neck.” (Matt.18: 6-7). Often ill-instructed people take scandal from even lawful things; hence, particular care is necessary when this danger is present. j). Bad example: really scandal of a milder form. Evil, like a fever, is contagious, especially with the young. k). Anger: leads to quarrels and many other evils. “Any man who is angry with his brother must answer for it before the court of justice.” (Matt. 5:22). It is sinful especially when shown for a mere accidental injury, when it is directed against the offender rather than the offence, when it causes one to inflict excessive punishment, when it becomes a passion beyond the control of reason. But anger may sometimes be lawful, as was that of Jesus Christ when He drove from the temple those who were carrying on worldly business there. St. Paul makes the distinction when he writes: “ Do not let resentment lead you into sin; the sunset must not find



you still angry.” (Eph. 4:26). So when there is displeasure only or when restrained indignation is directed against the fault or wrong disposition rather than a person, or what it brings about just redress and reasonable punishment for wrong doing, anger may be lawful. l). Hatred: enmity, directly oppose to the love of God and of our neighbor. Hatred must be distinguished from dislike. “If a man boasts of loving God, while he hates his own brother, he is a liar,” says St. John. (I John 4:20). In fact, he makes hatred appear equal to murder. “A man cannot hate his brother without being a murderer.” (I John 3:15). m). Revenge: returning evil for evil. It is directly opposed to God’s Law. “Revenge is Mine, and I will repay in due time.” (Deut. 32:35), “He that seeketh to revenge himself shall find vengeance from the Lord.” (Eccu. 28:1). “Do not be disarmed by malice; disarm malice with kindness.” (Rom. 12:21). How can a man who is seeking revenge sincerely pray the “Our Father”—“Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us?”

It is important to remember that injuries caused to others must be repaired. If, for instance, we have led others to sin through scandal, everything possible must be done to bring them back to God. (Taken from “This is the Faith by Francis J. Ripley; published by *Catechetical Guild Educational Society*. St. Paul, Minn., *Nihil Obstat & Imprimatur* given 1/25/1951).

Note: The Series on “The Commandments, Part III, & Part IV”, will be in the Next Issue of “Mystical Rose”

*“ The Following of Christ: Book III, Chapter VIII;
Of the Mean Estimation of One’s Self in the Eyes of God”*

I will speak to my Lord, whereas I am but dust and ashes. If I repute myself greater than this, behold, You stand against me; and my sins bear true testimony, and I cannot contradict it. But if I abase myself, and bring myself down to very nothingness, and divest myself of all self-esteem, and reduce myself, as I really am, to mere dust, Your grace will be favorable to me, and Your light will draw near to my heart; and all self-estimation, how small soever, will be sunk in the depths of my own nothingness, and there lose itself forever. It is there that You show me to myself, what I am, what I have been, and to what I am come; For I am nothing and I knew it not. If I am left to myself, behold I am nothing and all weakness; but if You suddenly look upon me, I presently become strong, and I am replenished with new joy. And truly wonderful it is that I am so quickly raised up and so graciously embraced by You; I who, by my own weight, am always sinking down to the lowest depths.

It is Your love that effects this, gratuitously preventing and assisting me in so many necessities, preserving me also from grievous dangers, and as I have

*“ Eternal
Father, by
the most
Precious
Blood of
Jesus
Christ,
glorify His
most holy
Name,
according
to the
intention
and the
desires of
His
adorable
Heart.”*



lost myself; and by this love more profoundly annihilated myself. Because, You, O most sweet Lord, deal with me above all desert, and above all that I dare to hope or ask for.

Blessed are You, O my God; for though I am unworthy of all good, yet Your generosity and infinite goodness never cease to do good even to those that are ungrateful, and that are turned far away from You. Please convert us unto You, that we may be humble, thankful, and devout; for You are our salvation, our courage, and our strength.

“Practical Reflections”

When we perceive within ourselves any feelings of vanity or self-complacency, we need but consider for one moment, the unfathomable depths of our corruption, and descend into the abyss of our miseries, to stifle them in their very birth. For how can we represent to ourselves that universal incapacity which we experience for supernatural good; our inclination for evil; how violently we are carried towards wickedness, the blindness of our understanding’ the malice of our hearts; and the fury of our passions. Which are always revolting against reason; in a word, how can we consider what we really are, and not despise and humble ourselves beneath all creatures? And if we consider ourselves with reference to God; if we reflect what He is and what we are in His sight a mere nothing, sinners, but sinners loaded with the numberless crimes we have committed, not knowing whether they have been ever pardoned; creatures so weak and feeble, so inconstant in good, and so constant in evil; alas! Perhaps in the sight of God, living and dying in the state of sin, and worthy only of His eternal hatred; how, in the midst of such reflections, can we possibly consent to the least thought of vanity? How true it is that to esteem ourselves is not to know, but to forget what we really are.

“Eternal Father, I offer Thee the Precious Blood of Jesus Christ in satisfaction for my sins and for the wants of our Holy Catholic Church.”

Prayer

Suffer not pride, O Lord, to deprive us of the sight, and conviction of our manifold miseries. Oblige us to do justice to ourselves and to Thee, by referring the glory of all things to Thee, to Whom alone it belongs; and by giving to ourselves nothing but contempt, which is truly our desert and appropriate portion. How does a Christian know that he is all Thine, my Savior-- and that he carries within himself an inexhaustible source of malice and corruption—give Thee alone the honor of all the good he may do by the help of Thy grace? Attributing nothing to himself but the evil which he commits, since without Thee he is incapable of doing anything but sin! Fill my heart with this true humility, without which it is impossible ever to become worthy of Thy love. Amen.

The Explanation of Our Mission and of Our Logo.

Since this is the first year of the “Mystical Rose”, it would seem only prudent that we explain why we call our newsletter, “Mystical Rose”, and why we have designed this Logo at the top of the first page.

The title, “Mystical Rose”, is taken from the Litany of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

The Logo of the crown of thorns, with the roses attached, symbolizes Our Lady’s suffering during Our Lord’s Passion and Death. It also symbolizes Her suffering for us, her spiritual children. The seven roses affixed to the crown of thorns represents the Seven Sorrows of Our Lady.

We dedicate this work to Our Blessed Mother and we ask Her to help and guide us, so that we may be able to serve God’s people by printing material that will be spiritually edifying: bringing those who read it to a better knowledge of their faith; a better understanding of what God requires of them in order to achieve salvation; and a more sincere desire to serve the Living God to the best of their ability.

Information about Catholicism is so very necessary in order to live a good life. The world in which we live today is in dire need of that information, in order to save mankind from its own self-imposed ignorance. We hope, by the grace of God, that our newsletter will help to inform.

Fr. James Kosek

439 Thoria Ct.

Batavia, Ill. 60510

Phone-1-630-347-6327

jkosek3@Juno.com