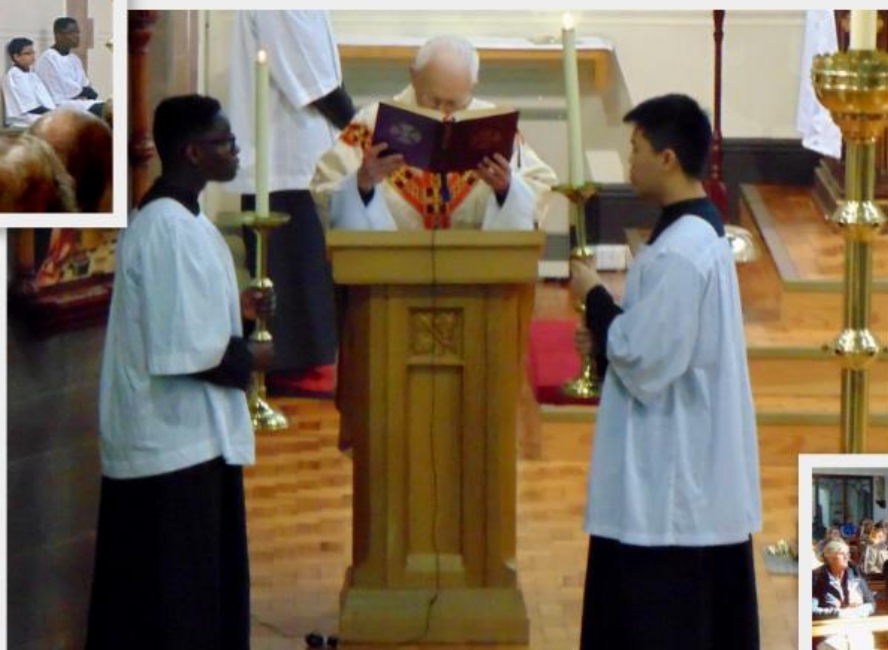


Year of Faith Sermons



PART THREE
Life in Christ

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The Dignity of the Human Person

Scripture

Ephesians 1:17-23; Luke 24:46-53

Catechism

Paragraphs

1691-1698 Life in Christ

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1716-1729 Vocation to beatitude: Part 1, Part 2 & Part 3

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Discussion

The Call

Confessing the faith and receiving that faith through the sacraments, the Christian is called to witness, proclaim and evangelise by word and action (c.f. Ephesians and Luke). Revealing the image of God in which we are created, the Saviour calls us with our human body, spiritual soul, intellect, will and freedom to seek happiness in knowing and loving God.

The Beatitudes

Though our natures are damaged by sin yet the grace Christ gives us is stronger. The beatitudes are a portrait of Christ and reveal the goal of all truly human acts. To know, love and serve God in this world and to come to beatitude, happiness in eternal life is our vocation. The pursuit of this vocation involves choosing, in the face of moral dilemmas and the varying attractions of this world, to act in union with Christ. Our guide in this pursuit

is the will of God taught in the Ten Commandments, the beatitudes and the traditions and teachings of the apostles and their successors.

Our Freedom

The ability to choose what is good and what leads to happiness is true freedom. The choice of evil, to reject what is good and true, is a misuse of freedom since it leads to slavery. It is the exercise of freedom that makes us responsible for our actions and their consequences. Original sin was a free choice to reject God's plan and seek happiness in the temporal things of creation and in lies. Such happiness is impermanent and the human nature made for eternal happiness is frustrated leading to unhappiness and disorder. On the cross Christ redeems us offering the truth that leads to freedom together with the grace which gives us fortitude, wisdom and confidence in exercising our freedom (c.f. Ephesians).

Questions for reflection

What is the difference between freedom to choose (being free from coercion) and the freedom to determine oneself (to form oneself and one's acts)?

Does self giving in loving service of another make you free?

The Morality of Human Actions

Scripture

1 Cor 10:1-11; 1 John 2:15-17

Catechism

Paragraphs

1749-1761 The sources of morality: [Part 1](#), [Part 2](#) and [Part 3](#)

1762-1775 The Passions: [Part 1](#), [Part 2](#) and [Part 3](#)

1776-1802 Moral Conscience: [Part 1](#), [Part 2](#), [Part 3](#), [Part 4](#), and [Part 5](#)

Discussion

Moral judgement of an act

Blessed with freedom each person is responsible for their acts which are good or evil.

The morality of an act depends upon the act itself, the intention of the person and the circumstances of the act.

Some acts are always wrong (intrinsically disordered) such as lying, murder and fornication. A good intention cannot make them right. Conversely a good act such as praying can be done for the wrong intention for example to be seen and praised. The circumstances of an act cannot change the morality of the act itself but they may diminish or increase the goodness or evil of the human act; for example the amount stolen in a theft or if a person was coerced into an act. The act itself, the intention and the circumstances must all be considered in making a judgement regarding the morality of a human act.

Passions

In themselves our affections, feelings or passions are neither good nor bad but once they engage the will

Questions for reflection

How do I inform my conscience?

Why are some acts intrinsically disordered?

and intellect they are good if they contribute to good actions and evil if they contribute to evil actions. Love and hatred, desire and fear, joy, sadness and anger are amongst the principle passions and by the grace of the Holy Spirit the Christian will regulate and use these passions in such a way that they tend towards good actions and guard against evil (c.f. [Pentecost sequence](#)) Thus both the intellect and the heart lead us to God. At the heart of each human person is the judgement made by reason about the morality of human acts.

Conscience

This is conscience and has been likened to the voice of God. A person is obliged to follow this judgement. It is our duty to inform and develop conscience knowing the teaching of the Christ and his Church, understanding how human acts should be judged, and in union with Christ through the Sacraments and prayer. If through no fault of their own a person's conscience misinforms them they cannot be considered guilty of the evil act they commit but the act itself remains evil and it causes damage. Consequently all have a duty to correct the uniformed conscience.

Virtues and Vices

Scripture

1 Cor 13

Catechism

Paragraphs

1803-1811 Moral virtues: [Part 1](#) & [Part 2](#)

1812-1845 Theological virtues: [Part 1](#) & [Part 2](#)

1846-1876 Sin: [Part 1](#), [Part 2](#), [Part 3](#), [Part 4](#), [Part 5](#)



Discussion

Moral virtues

Acquired by practice, the moral virtues are habits that guide us towards what is good. There are four principal or cardinal virtues:

- **Prudence** is the habit of choosing the right way to achieve what is good.
- **Justice** is the habit of giving to God and all people what is their due.
- **Fortitude** is the habit of courage in doing what is right.
- **Temperance** is the habit of moderation in enjoying and using created things.

Theological virtues

The theological virtues are infused into our souls at baptism and make it possible for us to respond to God's love. There are three of them:

- **Faith** enables us to commit ourselves to God and his Church and expresses itself in our belief, witness and actions.
- **Hope** enables us, by putting our trust in the promises of Christ, to live in the desire of Heaven as our goal.
- **Charity** enables us to love God above all things and our neighbour for God's sake.

Love is the motive for keeping the commandments, it strengthens and informs our faith and hope and brings unity to the Church. With other gifts too the

Holy Spirit never ceases to give us the graces we need for our Christian lives. Only sinners need Christ who calls us to repentance and conversion.

Sin

Sin is an offence against God whereby we fail to love him above all else and our neighbour for his sake. Sin may concern God, our neighbour or ourselves, it may be by commission or omission, but all sin stems from a free choice to disobey or rebel against God. The seriousness of sins differs. There are **venial sins** which damage but do not destroy the gift of Charity given to us at baptism and there are **mortal sins** which destroy the gift of Charity requiring a new act by God (absolution) to restore our ability to respond to his love. Mortal sin requires grave matter as specified by the Ten Commandments and the knowledge and full consent of the person committing the sin. The church has always recognised that if, having lost the gift of Charity through deliberate serious sin, a person dies obstinately refusing to repent they would be unable to respond to God's love and enter the Kingdom of Heaven. God's mercy is however beyond our comprehension. Sin itself, by repetition can lead to the formation of evil habits or vices which can in turn cloud the conscience and dull our awareness of sin including our own.

Questions for reflection

Will everyone go to heaven?

Where do we see moral virtues in modern British society?

Social Justice

Scripture

Acts 2:37-47; Romans 13:1-7

Catechism

Paragraphs

- 1878-1885 Individual and society
 1886-1896 Conversion and society
 1897-1927 Participation in social life: [Part 1](#), [Part 2](#) & [Part 3](#)
 1928-1948 Social justice: [Part 1](#), [Part 2](#) & [Part 3](#)

Discussion

Individual and society

The human vocation to be Christ like is lived as part of society. Human society is formed by and forms its members, it is both visible and spiritual. It has rules to safeguard its integrity and purpose. Society develops and protects the individual but also allows people to associate and thus achieve what they could not individually.

Order in the society

Within society different groups should support and respect each other's rights and competencies for the sake of the common good. The primary aim of society is to promote and support the fulfilment the human vocation. The daily conversion of heart to which each individual is called is necessary to build a just society especially when sin has caused society to value means rather than ends or neglect the rights and dignity of the human person.

Authority

The exercise of authority is necessary for the ordering of society but that authority draws its

legitimacy from God. Authority exists to serve the common good which is itself defined in reference to the human person. Authority presupposes respect for the human person and their rights, care for the well being and development of society and the maintenance of peace.

Participation in the society

All are called to participate in society first by exercising faithfully care of the areas for which one is immediately responsible and then by active participation in public life.

Social Justice

Social justice demands *firstly* that the rights and dignity of the human person are respected. No legitimate authority can fail in this. *Secondly* Social justice demands respect for the essential dignity and equality of all people created in the image of God and redeemed by Christ. *Thirdly* the solidarity engendered by the rights, dignity and equality of the human person must be recognised by the equitable distribution of material and spiritual goods.

Questions for reflection

What are the most serious issues in contemporary British society?
 What contributions can I make to social justice?

Law and Grace

Scripture

Galatians 1:11-19; Romans 5:18-25; John 10:10

Catechism

Paragraphs

1949-1960 The Natural Law: [Part 1](#) & [Part 2](#)
 1961-1986 The Old Law and the New: [Part 1](#) & [Part 2](#)
 1987-2005 Grace and Justification: [Part 1](#) & [Part 2](#)
 2006-2029 Merit and Holiness: [Part 1](#) & [Part 2](#)

Discussion

The Natural Law

The law and grace are the means by which, through Christ, we are guided on the way to salvation. By use of reason all are able to discern good and evil and together with our knowledge of and desire for God this ability gives us the Natural Law. Its principles expressed in the Ten Commandments the natural law demands reflection and consideration of the circumstances in which it is applied. Sin can obscure discernment of the natural law but it remains the foundation for human society, civil law and growth towards God. The law of the Old Testament, unable to give the grace needed to accomplish its demands, looks forward to the New Law of the Gospel which perfects it and makes it possible.

The Grace of God

The New Law is the is the grace of the Holy Spirit given through faith in Christ, it is a work of love made possible by the sacraments, it calls for conversion of heart, for the choice of love of God and neighbour and it frees us to act according to love.

Questions for reflection

What does St. Augustine mean by 'Love and do what you will' (Homily 7 on 1 John)?
 Do you know the Ten Commandments by heart?

The love given by the Holy Spirit, calling us to conversion, detaches us from sin, enables us to accept by faith the justice of God revealed in Christ and makes us able to live with God.

This is Grace, the free and unmerited gift of God, given to us in baptism, making us sharers in the divine life able to call God our Father by the power of the Holy Spirit (c.f. Galatians). We merit this gift only because of Jesus' sacrifice of love, justice and atonement has made it possible.

Justification

This is Justification. God owes us nothing, but because he has freely chosen to love us and justify us we can, united to Christ, call ourselves heirs of the promises of God. All are called to respond to grace, to live according to love, to become holy. It is a life long journey leading to an ever deeper union with Christ through the sacraments and by way of the cross.

Living as a Disciple

Scripture

Galatians 2:16. 19-21; 1 John 1:3-6; John 13:12-16; Luke 7:46-49

Catechism

Paragraphs

2030-2051 The Church as mother and teacher: [Part 1](#), [Part 2](#) & [Part 3](#)

2052-2082 The Ten Commandments

Discussion

Life of a disciple of Christ today

Nourished, as part of Christ's body, by the sacraments and faithful to the teaching of that body, the Church, the faithful offer themselves as a living sacrifice acceptable to God. This is the moral life which has its source and fulfilment in the Eucharist. Faithfully proclaiming the Gospel the Church must proclaim the principles of the moral life and, when the rights of the human person or salvation itself is at stake, judge between right and wrong.

Teaching authority

Successors of the Apostles the Pope and Bishops have a particular role to play teaching with authority and when the truth and purity of the faith is at risk, proclaiming infallibly the Gospel truth in matters of faith and morals. The moral life itself is the response to God's gift of justification (c.f. Galatians). The precepts of the Church guarantee the absolute minimum necessary for a loving response. **A good moral life is a missionary witness**; it builds up the Church and hastens the coming of God's Kingdom of justice, peace and love.

Questions for reflection

What does Jesus teach about the law in Mt 19:16-26?

What are the precepts of the Church?

The Ten Commandments

Acknowledging the validity of the Ten Commandments, Jesus deepens and widens them, unfolds the fullness of their demands, reveals that love is at their heart and affirms their completion in Christian discipleship (c.f. Luke).

Revealing the conditions of a life freed from sin and lived in covenant with God, the Ten Commandments make sense only in the light of God's free gift of love enunciated in the first commandment.

They form a unity in which love of God and love of neighbour, religious and social life come together. They are accessible to reason since they enshrine the principles of the natural law but only in Christ can they be fully understood. In the end it is the love of God and the gift of grace which is our motive for and the possibility of keeping the law. We keep the law because we have been justified (c.f. Galatians) Abiding in Christ the keeping of the law is the fruit we produce.

The First Commandment

“You Shall Worship the Lord Your God and Him Only Shall You Serve.”

Scripture

Psalm 62; Matthew 22:36-40;

Catechism

Paragraphs

2083-2099 The true worship of God: [Part 1](#) & [Part 2](#)

2110-2128 Religious freedom

2129-2132 Images



Discussion

Commandment and the theological virtues

We are called to have complete faith in God, to worship him, place all our hope in Him and love Him above all (c.f psalm 62). Faith is lacking when we refuse to hold as true what God has revealed and the Church teaches. Hope is lacking when we despair of God's desire to forgive and save us or when we presume that we do not need God's help. Love is lacking when ingratitude or lukewarmness or indifference marks our attitude to God. Faith, hope and love are revealed when we worship and adore God in prayer, above all when we unite the sacrifices we make to the one perfect sacrifice of Jesus on the Cross in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.

Commands

This commandment requires that societies respect religious liberty so that each person is free to act in accord with their convictions. Magic or witchcraft, consulting horoscopes or astrology, palm-readers and mediums imply not only a lack of trust in God but the desire to control and direct those things which pertain to God's providence alone.

We are called by this commandment to respect God and people or things dedicated to him. The commandment forbids idolatry which replaces God with something else such as power, pleasure, nationality, the state, money, or false gods and demons.

Atheism and agnosticism

Since the human person is the crown of God's creation, for us to worship anything less than God is not only to offend God but to lessen our own dignity. Atheism is a sin against this commandment but circumstances and intention may diminish the immutability of this offence. Christians must ask if their own sins have sometimes concealed the true nature of God and religion. The agnostic may be expressing a search for God but it may also express intellectual and moral laziness. With the incarnation a re-evaluation of the prohibition of images of God had to take place. The honour we pay to images of Christ and the saints is a respectful veneration not the adoration which belongs to God alone.

Questions for reflection

Does watching mediums on TV or reading horoscopes in the papers break the first commandment?
How would you explain a statue of the Sacred Heart to a non-christian?

The Second and Third Commandments

"You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain."

"Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labour, 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."

Scripture

Exodus 4:13-17; Mark 2:23-28;

Catechism

Paragraphs

- 2142-2149 The Holiness of God's name
2150-2167 Swearing Oaths and the dignity of our names: [Part 1](#) & [Part 2](#)
2168-2176 The Sabbath Day and the Lord's Day
2177-2188 The Eucharist and the Sunday obligation

Discussion

Respect for God and His name

The revelation of God's name to those who believe in him relates to the revelation of God himself, respect for God's holy name is equivalent to respect for God himself. **The name is revealed to us out of love**, indeed the name Jesus Christ speaks of divine love itself and to misuse those names or use them as swear words is an offence against divine love. Likewise to misuse the names of those dear to God especially Mary his Holy Mother cannot be right. To misuse those names seriously for evil purposes, or out of hatred, or mockery, or to cover up or excuse crime is blasphemy, a serious sin. To invoke God's name, to take **an oath** confirming the truth of what one says, is something that should not be done without careful consideration and only in relation to times when truth and justice are at stake. To make a false oath is to call on God to witness a lie.

Respect for God's work of creation

Respect for the Sabbath is respect for God's work of creation and for the rhythm of life which he created. We read in the book of Genesis how God himself rested on the seventh day after he had finished creation. The Sabbath, the seventh day rest was for

the Jewish people a memorial of God's work of rescuing them from slavery in Egypt and of God's work in making them His chosen people.

Jesus proposed the Sabbath as a day for doing good, for healing and for saving life and, in doing so, He revealed himself to be **Lord of the Sabbath**.

On the day after the Sabbath the first day of the week, Sunday, God's greatest work of creation was accomplished with the resurrection of Jesus Christ our saviour from the dead. For Christians this day fulfils and replaces the Sabbath day. The Sunday celebration of the Eucharist is the heart of the Church's life, the day on which Christ's resurrection, the new work of creation is recalled made present and celebrated by His followers. As a day of prayer, celebration of the Eucharist and rest Sunday is a 'day of obligation' for all Catholics. By attending Holy Mass, resting from unnecessary work, spending time with family and friends and looking to care for those in need, the Catholic keeps holy the Sabbath. The freedom to keep Sunday holy is a human right.

Questions for reflection

How can one publicly manifest respect for God's name? Does the way I spend Sunday necessitate others working unnecessarily?

The Fourth Commandment

“Honour your father and your mother, that your days may be long in the land which the Lord your God gives you.”

Scripture

Luke 3:51-52; Proverbs 6:20-22; Matthew 13:46-50

Catechism

Paragraphs

2197-2206 Love in the family: [Part 1](#) & [Part 2](#)

2207-2233 [Family in society](#) & Family relationships & duties: [Part 1](#) & [Part 2](#)

2234-2257 Civil authorities/ Civic duties

Discussion

Promise of peace and joy

Isaiah proclaims peace and joy as gifts from the LORD. Paul promises peace to all who are faithful to the crucified Christ. Jesus sends out his disciples to be heralds of peace, which leads to the experience of joy now, and a pledge of heavenly joy.

Christian family

The duties and rewards of love (love your neighbour as yourself) are exemplified in family life, under the title “Honour your father and your mother”. The Christian family is a communion of faith, hope and charity – a miniature of the universal family of the Church – it is rightly called a **domestic Church**. The Christian family is a communion of persons, an image of the communion of the Trinity – a reflection of the God of love, bonded by prayer & selfless sacrifice, weaned on the Word of God, dedicated to the giving of life through the procreation & education of children.



Family in society

The family is the basic cell of society, where authority, stability and sharing are first experienced. By learning moral values from childhood, by honouring God and his gifts and making good use of freedom, family members are initiated into life in society. In its own interests, therefore, local, national and international society should protect, defend and support the status of marriage and family life.

Duties of children

Children are duty-bound to obey, honour and respect their parents, reflecting the requirements we all have as children of God. Grown-up children are often called to care for parents in sickness, old age, with different forms of mental, physical & spiritual needs. This is part of a practical gratitude to those through whom they received the gift of human life, along with the gift of faith, baptism and life in the family of the Church, as children of God, called to follow Jesus. All should be educated to be good citizens in this world, without losing sight of the world to come, which is the measure of all things, here and hereafter

Questions for reflection

How is marriage related to the 4th Commandment?

How are authority and obedience related in this commandment?

The Fifth Commandment

"You shall not kill."

Scripture

Psalm 68; Luke 23:25-37;

Catechism

Paragraphs

2258-2283 Respect for human life
2284-2301 Respect for dignity of persons
2302-2330 Safeguarding peace

Discussion

Natural Law

Moses tells God's people: Obey the Lord God, whose Word is "in your heart for your observance". This is the Natural Law, by which we are created by God to be aware of what is right and what is wrong – what to do and what to avoid. God-seeking hearts (psalm 68) will see in Christ, as God and man, the perfection of love in the total giving of his life (by his death on the cross) so as to reconcile all creation from the chaos of sin to the calm of mercy and peace. His mercy and compassion is mirrored in the parable of the good Samaritan, in which we are taught to respect human life and dignity, a prelude to peace.

Sacredness of human life

Human life is sacred (=holy,=unique), beginning with the creative action of God, and remaining in that unique relationship until the end; during which time no-one can claim the right to destroy an innocent human being. Abel's murder by his brother Cain, out of envy and anger, is the first of many such sacrileges in human history against the holiness of

Questions for reflection

Is war ever justified?
How can one value human life?

the Creator, and in conflict with the law forbidding killing, which is universally valid; it obliges everyone, always and everywhere. Such intentional homicide includes abortion, euthanasia and suicide. Legitimate defence of life can be not only a right, but even a duty.

Human dignity

Human dignity is to be respected by what is taught by word or example, it is wrong to lead others astray by undervaluing the gift of life. It must be respected by care for bodily health, by protection from invasive experiments, from illegitimate transplants, from torture, kidnapping and hostage-taking. Even the bodies of the dead demand respect, burial reveals respect for the children of God, temples of the Holy Spirit and heirs to the kingdom of heaven.

Our Lord promotes peace, teaching abhorrence of anger, envy & hatred. Disciples should do likewise.

"You have learnt how it was said to our ancestors: You must not kill. (...) But I say this to you: anyone who is angry with his brother will answer for it before the court"

Matthew 5:21-23

The Sixth Commandment

“You shall not commit adultery.”

Scripture

Genesis 1:26-28; Matthew 19:3-12; 1 Cor 7:12-20

Catechism

Paragraphs

2331-2336	The human person as male and female
2337-2359	The vocation to chastity
2360-2379	The love of husband and wife
2380-2400	Offences against the dignity of marriage

Discussion

The human person as male and female

The sixth commandment has traditionally been understood to encompass the whole of human sexuality. Through sexuality we express ourselves as male or female. Made in the image and likeness of God, men and women are called to love and communion with God and with one another, to “be fruitful and multiply” (Gen 1:28). Our affectivity, our capacity to love and procreate, and to relate with one another more generally, are signs that we are sexual beings. Sexual identity is expressed in the difference and complementarity of male and female.

The vocation to chastity

Men and women especially imitate the Creator’s generosity and fecundity when they live the sacrament of marriage in fidelity and fruitfulness. The flourishing of family life and indeed the harmony of wider society are thereby also nourished. All people are called to live in chastity, which is the right ordering of sexuality. Chastity requires self-mastery and self-knowledge. Through temperance and the choosing of what is good, we are little-by-little able to govern our passions and find peace. Chastity requires prayer and the exercise of virtue. Chastity especially blossoms in friendship. Both celibate and married people are called to chastity. Each is called to help the other to grow in this virtue.

Sins against chastity

Lust, the disordered desire for sexual pleasure, is an offence against chastity because it isolates that pleasure

from its procreative and unitive purposes. Hence masturbation, fornication, pornography, prostitution and rape, as manifestations of lust, are gravely contrary to chastity, for they are not chaste expressions of sexuality. Homosexual acts offend against chastity. Such acts are “intrinsically disordered” (*Persona humana* 8) because they close the sexual act to the gift of life. People with homosexual tendencies must be accepted with compassion and sensitivity. Through cultivating disinterested friendships they can achieve peace.

The love of husband and wife

The sexual act between a husband and wife, when ordered to the union of the couple and the procreation of children, is a chaste, noble and honourable act. Artificial techniques to regulate fertility are wrong because they do not allow for a true expression of love, which by its nature is fruitful. Periodic continence and natural methods of regulation of procreation are legitimate ways of spacing births because, requiring generosity and a spirit of sacrifice, they show how love and sexuality are more than something simply biological. A child, as the fruit of love, is not a right but a gift from God. All techniques that create a child outside the sexual act, (e.g. IVF) are gravely wrong. Offences against the dignity of marriage include adultery, divorce, polygamy, incest, “free unions” and “trial marriages”. In one way or another, these undermine the free, total, fruitful and faithful nature of the love between husband and wife.

Questions for discussion

Why is sexual activity outside the marital act harmful to the individual, to couples and to society?

How can the sixth commandment help us understand love in family life?

The Seventh Commandment

"You shall not steal"

Scripture

Matthew 20:23-30; 2 Cor 8:9;

Catechism

Paragraphs

2402-2418 Ownership of Goods and what Goods are for: [Part 1](#) & [Part 2](#)

2419-2425 The Social Doctrine of the Church

2426-2442 Economic Activity, Social Justice and International Solidarity: [Part 1](#) & [Part 2](#)

2443-2457 Love for the Poor

Discussion

Property

The seventh commandment – “You shall not steal” – forbids the unjust taking and keeping of the goods of one’s neighbour. God gave man stewardship over the earth and its resources, to be mastered and enjoyed by everyone. The appropriation of private property is legitimate, for it promotes our freedom and personal dignity. Moreover, having property allows each person to meet his basic needs. Nevertheless the right to property should not blind the person from the **universal destination of goods**: we are entrusted by God as “*mere stewards*” to have a duty of communicating to others – family first, but wider society too – the benefit of that property. Justice and charity demand this. Meanwhile political authority has the right and the duty to regulate ownership, for the sake of the common good. The virtues of temperance and justice, and the practice of solidarity help us to keep the seventh commandment.

Sins against 7th Commandment

The usurping of another’s property against the reasonable will of the owner is theft, although if there is presumed consent, there is no theft. The payment of unjust wages, business fraud and forcing up prices are acts against this commandment, because these are forms of unjustly taking what is

not one’s right to have. This commandment requires that promises and contracts be upheld if these are morally just, and that commutative justice (which regulates exchange between parties) “*obliges strictly*”. Games of chance or wagers can become morally wrong if they enslave those involved.

Church’s social doctrine

The commandment also enjoins respect for creation. The Church’s social doctrine interprets events in the course of history, proposing principles, criteria and guidelines for understanding and action related to economic and social matters. The Church makes a moral judgement “*when the fundamental rights of the person or the salvation of souls requires it*”. Everybody has the right to economic initiative which can sometimes be characterised by conflict between parties. In this case bodies such as trade unions or the state itself can help to guarantee justice, such as ensuring a just wage. Justice and solidarity among nations need to be promoted, where rich nations give direct aid when needed to poorer countries. It is the part of the laity to take the initiative in these areas. Indeed the Church has a **preferential love for the poor**, and vigorously encourages her members to undertake works of mercy, for “*When we serve the poor and the sick, we serve Jesus*” (St Rose of Lima).

Questions for reflection

How can the seventh commandment ensure better relations with my neighbours?
How can helping the poor ensure a more just society?

The Eighth Commandment

“You shall not bear false witness against your neighbour.”

Scripture

John 8:32, 14:6; Proverbs 25:9-10; Sir 27:16-21

Catechism

Paragraphs

- 2462-2474 Living in, and bearing witness to, the truth: [Part 1](#) & [Part 2](#)
2475-2487 Offences against truth
2488-2492 Respect for the truth
2493-2499 The use of the social communications media
2500-2503 Truth, beauty and sacred art

Discussion

The Truth

The eighth commandment states that “You must not bear false witness”, which in essence **forbids misrepresenting the truth to others**. Since God is the truth, offences against this commandment are offences against God. The seeking and finding of the truth will set us free. By our very nature, we seek the truth. Hence we also have a moral obligation to seek it. By striving to live according to the Lord’s example of simplicity, we bear witness to the truth. The supreme witness that we can show is that of giving our own lives, i.e. **martyrdom**. The martyr bears witness to the truth of the faith and of Christian doctrine.

Sins against the 8th Commandment

Christ’s disciples have “put on the new man ... created in holiness” (cf Eph 4:24). They must therefore avoid all offences against the truth, such as false witness, perjury, rash judgment, detraction or calumny, all of which harm in some way the reputation of one’s neighbour. Flattery, boasting, and lying also offend against the truth, because they misrepresent it and sometimes can also lead others

away from the truth. Indeed “lying is destructive of society” (CCC 2486).

Reparation

Every offence against justice and truth requires reparation. Sometimes it is appropriate not to reveal the truth. Charity and respect for the truth demand this, so that the good and even the safety of others can be upheld. For example, sometimes information should be kept secret at a personal or professional level. The secret of the Sacrament of Reconciliation is sacred and cannot be violated under any pretext (CCC 2490). The Golden Rule can help us discern when it is appropriate to reveal the truth (“*One should treat others as one would like others to treat oneself.*”)

Use of social media

While the social communications media are important tools for communicating the truth, great care must be taken on the part of users to be vigilant over what they see and hear. Those who disseminate the media must show responsibility and respect charity. Art – and especially sacred art – is an evocative way of expressing the beauty of the truth.

Questions for discussion

How might I bear effective witness to the truth at home, at work or with my friends?
Are there any disadvantages of having a free press?

The Ninth and Tenth Commandment

“You shall not covet your neighbour’s house; you shall not covet your neighbour’s wife”

Scripture

Romans 8:14-25; 1 John 2:15-17

Catechism

Paragraphs

- 2514-2516 The struggle with concupiscence
2517-2519 Purification of the heart
2520-2533 The battle for purity
2534-2540 The disorder of covetous desires: [Part 1](#) & [Part 2](#)
2541-2557 The Christian response to covetous desires: [Part 1](#), [Part 2](#) & [Part 3](#)



Discussion

Concupiscence of the flesh

The last two commandments are both about “coveting”, and disordered desire, and so can be treated together. This type of desire is also known as “concupiscence”. Etymologically, concupiscence means any **intense desire**, but the Christian tradition has always seen it as the movement of the “sensitive appetite” against what is reasonable. Concupiscence inclines us to commit sin. St Paul recognises the rebellion of the “flesh” against the “spirit” in the human person, who is both spirit and body. It is not a matter of despising the body, but rather of willingly submitting to virtue and resisting vice (sin).

Integrity, Purity of Heart and Poverty of spirit

Achieving integration (c.f. sermon on the sixth commandment) requires the help of the Holy Spirit (c.f. Gal 5:25). Overcoming disordered desires (“purity of heart”) is achievable through the exercise of charity, chastity, love of the truth and love of orthodoxy of faith (c.f. CCC 2518). Purity of heart enables us to see – even now – as God sees. We can justly refer to the “battle” for purity, since concupiscence of the flesh is so strong. The exercise

of purity of intention and of vision, both interior and exterior (which includes the disciplining of the feelings and the imagination), helps us in the struggle. **Prayer also helps.** An environment that engenders both personal and societal modesty is important to achieve purity of heart. Poverty of spirit, which entails detachment from all that is not God, is possible with God’s grace. With it, we are freed from immoderate attachment to things of this world and made ready to see God face-to-face.

Sins against the 9th and 10th commandments

The tenth commandment, completing the ninth, forbids greed, avarice, and the harming of our neighbour’s property. It is not a sin to desire the goods of one’s neighbour if that desire is just. Some people have a harder struggle than others to uphold this commandment, given where they work. Envy is also a sin against the tenth commandment. Representing a form of sadness, it can become a mortal sin if left unchecked. As the fulfilment of the Law, Jesus Christ enables us to “*have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires*” (c.f. Gal 5:24) so as to be led by the Spirit.

Questions for reflection

How might reflecting on the last two commandments help overcome a harmful habit?
Is it wrong to want to earn more than the bare minimum?