MEDITATION ON II, III, & IV, COMMANDMENTS rd. on Mar15, 06

THE SECOND COMMANDMENT

The name of the Lord is Holy

The second commandment enjoins respects for the Lord's name. Like the first commandment it belongs to the virtue of religion and more particularly it governs our use of speech in sacred matters.

"Among all the words of Revelation, there is one which is unique; the revealed name of God. God confides his name to those who believe in him; he reveals himself to them in his personal mystery. The gift of a name belongs to the order of trust and intimacy. "The Lord's name is holy." For this reason man must not abuse it. He must keep it in mind in silent, loving adoration. He will not introduce it into his own speech except to bless, praise, and glorify it."(CCC 2143).

The name of a person is the symbol for the person as a nations flag is symbol for the nation. Hence, "Respect for his name is an expression of the respect owed to the mystery of God himself and to the whole sacred reality it evokes. The *sense of the sacred* is part of the virtue of religion". The *Catechism* continues by quoting the words of Cardinal Newman: Are these feelings of fear and awe Christian feelings or not?.. I say this, then, which I think no one can reasonably dispute. They are the class of feelings we should have - yes, have to an intense degree - if we literally had the sight of Almighty God; therefore they are the class of feelings, which we shall have, if we realize His presence. In proportion as we believe that He is present, we shall have them; and not to have them, is not to realize, not to believe that He is present (ccc. 2144).

The prophets taught God's covenant people to reverence the name of God so much that they should not pronounce it at all. God told Moses at the burning bush that his name is *Yahweh* ("I AM"). As centuries passed, the people avoided desecrating God's name by using an alternative word, *Adonai,* the Hebrew word for Lord.

The reverence of God depends on the knowledge of the Divine. The more we know God, the more reverence we will show. In chapter 6 of Isaiah, we see the Seraphim, who know God more personally because they stand before Him always, covering their bodies with special wings and with great awe worship Him with these words: Holy, Holy, Holy…

When Jesus taught how to pray, he asked us first to pray, " hallowed be thy name"- holy be the name of God. These words invite us to praise and glorify God's name. Several Psalms encourages praising God's name:

- LORD, our Lord, how awesome is your name through all the earth!(Ps.8:2)
- Sing to God, praise the divine name; exalt the rider of the clouds. Rejoice before this God whose name is the LORD.(Ps. 68:5).
- I will …glorify your name forever, Lord my God (Ps. 86:12)
- Bless the LORD, my soul; all my being, bless his holy name! (Ps. 103:1)
- Hallelujah! Praise, you servants of the LORD, praise the name of the LORD (Ps.113: 1)
- I will extol you, my God and king; I will bless your name forever (Ps. 145:1)

- Give to the LORD the glory due his name!(Ps. 96:8)

Name of Jesus—name above all other names

St. Paul underlines the greatness of the Holy Name of Jesus: "*And for this God raised him high, and gave him the name which is above all other names: so that all beings in the heavens, on earth and in the underworld, should bend the knee at the name of Jesus"* (Philp.2: 9-10). "*Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved*." (Rom.10:13).

Jesus himself declared the power of His name:

"*Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them*."(Mt. 18:20)

"*Whatever you ask in my name, I will do, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son" (Jn. 14:13).*

"The Advocate, the holy Spirit that the Father will send in my name…" (Jn. 14:26).

"…Whatever you ask the Father in my name he may give you" (Jn. 15:16).

"Amen, amen, I say to you, whatever you ask the Father in my name he will give you. Until now you have not asked anything in my name; ask and you will receive, so that your joy may be complete" (Jn. 16:23-24).

The reason for the incredible success of the Apostles' ministry was that it was in the name of Jesus:

"Peter (said) to them, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the holy Spirit" (Act. 2:38).

"*And a man crippled from birth was carried and placed at the gate of the temple called "the Beautiful Gate" every day to beg for alms from the people who entered the temple. When he saw Peter and John about to go into the temple, he asked for alms… Peter said, "I have neither silver nor gold, but what I do have I give you: in the name of Jesus Christ the Nazorean, (rise and) walk." Then Peter took him by the right hand and raised him up, and immediately his feet and ankles grew strong. He leaped up, stood, and walked around, and went into the temple with them, walking and jumping and praising God*" (Acts. 3:2-8).

Even when the Apostles were persecuted for Jesus' namesake they reaffirmed their loyalty to His name even by going to jail:

"*On the next day, their leaders, elders, and scribes were assembled in Jerusalem, with Annas the high priest, Caiaphas, John, Alexander, and all who were of the high-priestly class. They brought them into their presence and questioned them, "By what power or by what name have you done this?" Then Peter, filled with the holy Spirit, answered them: all of you and all the people of Israel should know that it was in the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarean whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead; in his name this man stands before you healed*"(Acts. 4:6-10).

What the enemies feared most was also the name of Jesus:

"*What are we to do with these men? Everyone living in Jerusalem knows that a remarkable sign was done through them, and we cannot deny it. But so that it may not*

be spread any further among the people, let us give them a stern warning never again to speak to anyone in this name. "So they called them back and ordered them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus" (Acts. 4:16-18).

"*Then the high priest rose up and all his companions, that is, the party of the Sadducees, and, filled with jealousy, laid hands upon the apostles and put them in the public jail… When they had brought them in and made them stand before the Sanhedrin, the high priest questioned them, "We gave you strict orders (did we not?) to stop teaching in that name…After recalling the apostles, they had them flogged, ordered them to stop speaking in the name of Jesus, and dismissed them. So they left the presence of the Sanhedrin, rejoicing that they had been found worthy to suffer dishonor for the sake of the name"* (Act. 5:18, 27-28, 40-41).

Catechism says: "The second commandment *forbids the abuse of God's name,* i.e., every improper use of the names of God, Jesus Christ, but also of the Virgin Mary and all the saints" (CCC 2146)

A - **How do we desecrate the Holy Name of God?**

(1) **Blasphemy**:

Using God's name in a disrespectful manner is *blasphemy:* "*Tell the Israelites: anyone who curses his God shall bear the penalty of his sin; whoever blasphemes the name of the Lord shall be put to death. The whole community shall stone him; alien and native alike must be put to death for blaspheming the Lord's name"* (Lev. 24: 15-16).

-Cursing God for some horrible disaster; e.g. the wife of Job in the Old Testament (cfr. Job. 2:9).
-Speaking against God in hardships and tribulations, telling that He is not concerned about us
-Finding fault with God for not granting all our prayers.
-Finding fault with God for all the calamities brought about by the selfishness of men
-Using insulting words against God and Divine subjects, to get applause of friends.
-Questioning God's almighty power and loving providence at the face of the evil in the world
-Talking disrespectfully about the Blessed Virgin Mary whom God has made the mother of God
-Speaking sarcastically about the saints whom God has approved of as His friends.

(2) **Violation of the Promises in God's name**.

"The *Promises* made to others in God's name engage the divine honor, fidelity, truthfulness, and authority. They must be respected in justice. To be unfaithful to them is to misuse God's name and in some way to make God out to be a liar." (ccc2147)

(3) **Magical use of the Divine name.**

"The second commandment also forbids *magical use* of the divine name." (ccc2149)

B- **How do we take the name of the Lord in vain**?

(1) **False Oaths**:

"Taking an oath or swearing is to take God as witness to what one affirms. It is to invoke the divine truthfulness as a pledge of one's own truthfulness." (ccc.2150)

"As Creator and Lord, God is the norm of all truth. Human speech is either in accord with or in opposition to God who is Truth itself. When it is truthful and legitimate, an oath highlights the relationship of human speech with God's truth. A false oath calls on God to be witness to a lie." (ccc.2151)

(2) **Perjury**:

"A person commits *perjury* when he makes a promise under oath with no intention of keeping it, or when after promising on oath he does not keep it. Perjury is a grave lack of respect for the Lord of all speech. Pledging oneself by oath to commit an evil deed is contrary to the holiness of the divine name." (ccc2152)

So, for example, to place your hand on the Holy Bible and swear to tell the whole truth and nothing but the truth "so help me God," and then tell a lie is considered perjury and a serious violation of the 2nd Commandment. Another example, when a couple plans to get married, they will be asked by the representative of the Church the questions such as 'Were you ever married before?' or 'Do you intend to enter a permanent, faithful, and God willing, fruitful union?' Lying about any of these is considered perjury and a mortal sin.

(3) **Oaths.**

"In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus explained the Second Commandment: " You have heard that it was said to the men of old, ' You shall not swear falsely but shall perform to the lord what you have sworn'. But I say to you, do not swear at all… Let what you say be simply 'Yes' or 'No'; anything more than this comes from the evil one. Jesus teaches that every oath involves a reference to God and that God's presence and his truth must be honored in all speech. Discretion in calling upon God is allied with a respectful awareness of his presence, which all our assertions either witness to or mock." (ccc.2153)

C- **<u>Violation of the 2nd commandment by omission</u>**

"The faithful should bear witness to the Lord's name by confessing the faith without giving way to fear. Preaching and catechizing should be permeated with adoration and respect for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ." (ccc.2145).

Jesus' words : "*Every one who acknowledges me before others I will acknowledge before my heavenly Father". But if any one publicly denies me, I will openly deny him before my Father in heaven"* (Mt. 10:32-33) is to be taken seriously here. Therefore,

-Negligence in acknowledging God and one's Faith in public for fear of loosing acceptance

-Shyness in praising the Lord loudly and demonstrating due piety in community worship for fear of what others will think,

-Taking all the credits to oneself instead of acknowledging God's role behind all our gains,

are violations of 2nd Commandment by omission.

D- <u>Violation of the 2nd Commandment by showing disrespect</u>

The whole theme of the 2nd Commandment is respect for God. Though specifically it is about our speech, it is evident that it pertains to our actions also. Ezekiel 43:12 says: " *This is the basic law of the Temple: <u>Holiness</u>! The entire top of the hill where the Temple is built is <u>holy</u>. Yes, this is the primary law concerning* it."

When the Bible says that the holy angels covered their spiritual body with wings as they worshipped God (Isaiah 6:1-6) and Moses lay prostrate before the Lord for 40 days to worship Him (Deut. 9:18), doesn't it challenge us to re-consider the various acts of disrespect in the presence of Sacred Mysteries?

- Sitting in the presence of the Most Holy Sacrament in such a way as to give great importance to our bodily comforts, ignoring totally the ineffable and most sacred Mystery (Kneeling is the most respectful posture before God; however, when get extremely tired of kneeling, sitting also is understandable).
- Talking in the Holy presence except in emergency.
- Wearing immodest dress (It is both disrespect to the most respectable God and occasion for distraction to others).
- Imprudent and untimely expressions of love in the Church, especially during the Holy Mass.
- Talking and making noise in the Church, even when it is not the time for worship.

All these amount to disrespect for God.

E -<u>Disrespect in the Prayers</u>

"Then the Lord said, because these people draw near with words only and honors me with their lips alone, though their hearts are far from me ... the wisdom of its wise men shall perish…" (Isaiah 29:13).

The respect for God's name necessarily demands to call up on his name (in prayer) with utmost attention and care. However, distractions may come. But if we try with the grace of God, being conscious of the most Holy presence with us, we will be able to pray with more concentration. (Remember how much concentration we have when driving?).

Looking around during prayer,
Concentrating on the loved ones during prayer,
Caressing and petting others (except little children) during prayer,
Making noise (with clothes etc.) during prayer,
Coming late for the prayer,

If these are willfully avoided, it is easy to get more concentration.

III COMMANDMENT

The third Commandment again, is about giving the first place to God, by observing a day specially set apart to honor God. Civilizations other than that of the

Hebrews had Sabbaths, days on which work was taboo. But to Israelites, the Sabbath was a tithing of time, a day consecrated to God. Just as one tithed the first born of the flock or the first fruits of a harvest, so one tithed work time too.

Honor the Lord's Day as a Holy Day.

If we read carefully the command of Yahweh (the rules given to Moses) regarding the Sabbath, in Ex.20: 8-11, we can see verses 9 to 11 stress the need of taking rest on Sabbath. But, before that there is an ever more fundamental command: *"Remember to observe the Sabbath as a holy day"* (verse 8). So, here it is very clear that to observe that day, as a holy day, it is necessary to spend it as a day of rest. Pope John Paul II, in his apostolic exhortation 'The Lord's Day,' clarifies it: "Sunday has become a day of rest because it was blessed by God and because he has made it holy. And it **should be a day of Thanksgiving and Praise".**

Catechism of the Catholic Church highlights the holiness of the Sabbath day in the following paragraphs:

#. 2168 -The Third Commandment of the Decalogue recalls the holiness of the Sabbath: "The seventh day is a Sabbath of solemn rest, holy to the Lord."

2169 -In speaking of the Sabbath, the Scripture recalls creation: *"For six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day; therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it."*

2171 -The e Sabbath is for the Lord, holy and set apart for the praise of God, his work of creation, and his saving actions on behalf of Israel. So the Church teaches that the Sabbath is a day dedicated to God. It is the *Lord's day*. Therefore, its observance is primarily to honor God and worship Him. That day itself has holiness. It is entirely different from other days. **It is holy**.

For the reason of attending the Mass on the evening of Sunday or Obligatory day, the faithful are not exempted from observing the Sabbath as holy day. Considering Sunday as a time merely for relaxing the body and mind to start the next week's work, for entertaining the friends and relatives, for engaging in sports and celebrations are certainly contrary to the spirit of the Sabbath Law.

Demanding that the Sunday Mass should be very short, selecting the churches where Mass time is less, leaving the church before the Holy Mass is finished and coming late, are really showing disrespect to the Lord's holy Day.

How to honor the Lord's Day as holy?

1. **By participating in the Sunday Eucharist**

Sunday Eucharistic Liturgy is the heart of the Sunday observances:

"The Sunday Eucharist is the foundation and confirmation of all Christian practice. For this reason the faithful are obliged to participate in the Eucharist on days of obligation, unless excused for a serious reason (for example, illness, the care of infants) or dispensed by their own pastor. Those who deliberately fail in this obligation commit a grave sin." (ccc2181)

"Sunday is the day on which the paschal mystery is celebrated in the light of the a apostolic tradition and is to be observed as the foremost holy day of obligation in the Universal Church." (ccc2177)

"This practice of Christian assembly dates from the beginnings of the apostolic age. The Letter to the Hebrews reminds the faithful '*not to neglect to meet together, as in the habit of some, but to encourage one another*." (ccc2178)

The Bible tells us that the Early Christians celebrated the Eucharist (Breaking of the Bread) daily with great enthusiasm: "*Each day, with one heart, they regularly went to the Temple but met in their houses for breaking the bread…*" (Acts. 2:46). It was above all on 'the first day of the week, Sunday, that the Christians met to break bread (see Acts.20:7). Here, the word "breaking of the bread" means the Eucharistic Liturgy of the Holy mass.

Vatican II's inspiring teaching merits our attention in this point:
"At the Last Supper, on the night he was betrayed, our Savior instituted the eucharistic sacrifice of his Body and Blood. This he did in order to perpetuate the sacrifice of the Cross throughout the ages until he should come again, and so to entrust to his beloved spouse, the Church, a memorial of his death and resurrection: a sacrament of love, a sign of unity, a bond of charity, a paschal banquet in which Christ is consumed, the mind is filled with grace and a pledge of future glory is given to us.

The Church, therefore, earnestly desires that Christ's faithful, when present at this mystery of faith, should not be there as strangers or silent spectators. On the contrary, through a good understanding of the rites and prayers they should participate <u>knowingly, devoutly and actively</u>…offering the Immaculate Victim, not only through the hands of the priest, also with him, they should learn to offer themselves too. Through Christ the Mediator they should be drawn day by day into ever closer union with God and each other, so that finally God may be all in all." (*Constitution on Liturgy, 47-48)*.

<u>*How to participate knowingly, devoutly and actively?*</u> (practical aspects)

(1) Obtain at least an overall knowledge about the meaning of the Prayers and Rituals. Meditate on the Prayers, Rituals and Readings ahead of the celebration.
(2) Arrive at the Mass with an attitude of giving yourself to the celebration. Come with ears open to God's word, eyes open to the beauty of the ritual, throat wide open to sing and pray with all your strength and heart to give God lots of love.
(3) Always arrive at the Mass early to prepare your mind, soul and body to receive the heavenly graces, which God plans to shower on you through the Mass. It is better to start the preparation on the previous day so that you will get time to make confession if necessary. It is highly important to repent about the past to offer the Holy Mass worthily.
(4) Come to the Mass with a soul full of prayer; then you will really meet God at Mass. Be careful not to lose that prayerful state by unnecessary conversation before Mass. On the way to the Church, let your soul praise God continuously for the infinite graces you are going to receive in the Mass. Meditative Rosary before the Mass is a

very good preparation because it is the meditation of the same Paschal Mysteries, which are celebrated on the altar.

(5) Hear the word of God with full concentration and earnestness, so that God's all-powerful Word may transform and heal you.

(6) Participate in the Mass with great faith in the Sacred Mysteries on the altar. Have the spirit of the following Scripture in your mind all through the Mass: "*Whenever you eat this bread, then, and drink this cup, you are proclaiming the Lord's death until he comes*" (1Cor.11:26). See the suffering Jesus in front of you on the altar, to liberate you from your sin, to heal you from all your ailments and to fill you with the Holy Spirit. In response to his tremendous love, offer your body, mind and soul to him.

(7) Have special intentions for every Mass besides the common intention. Give priority to spiritual needs.

(8) Open yourself to the spirit of the community. Remember that you are not alone at the altar. The whole Universal Church and millions of its members are with you, and every Mass is offered for the whole world.

(9) Fix your heart on the Eucharistic Lord's love, while you stand in line for the Holy Communion. Approach him with a heart burning with love and repentance. Make acts of faith and love continuously. Receive the Lord with great affection and gratitude. Having enthroned him in your heart, immerse in conversing with him in deep silence and with full concentration till the concluding prayer.

(10) Spend some time alone with the Lord just after the Mass. This you can do on your way back to home, if you have no time to spare.

(11) Live the Mass the whole day: by offering each hardship and suffering of the day to the eternal Father with the merits of the suffering of Christ for the salvation of the world.

It is to be noted that "on Sundays and other holy days of obligation the faithful are bound to participate in the Mass."(ccc2180) To meet this obligation, all Catholics would optimally have Sunday off, so that they'd have the opportunity to go to church and spend some time with the family. But in reality, some people must work frequently on Sundays—doctors, nurses, pharmacists, police officers, firefighters, and so on. Pastors can transfer the obligation to another day, <u>but only on an individual basis and only for serious reasons</u>.

(2) Honor the Lord's Day by devoting to the Interior Life

In addition to the primary obligation of participating in the Holy Mass, the faithful are to make use of Sundays to build up their interior life. Catechism of the Catholic Church says: " Sunday is a time for reflection, silence, cultivation of the mind, and meditation which furthers the growth of the Christian interior life"(ccc2186)

Nowadays, people seem to have a misunderstanding. They think that if they could attend a weekend Mass, their Sunday obligation is over; and that the rest of the time they can utilize for anything they want. This is not correct. The Sabbath is called the "Lord's Day." Yes, it is a day set apart for the Lord—to know him more and more, to love him more and more, through ardent prayer and worship.

Through the prophet Isaiah, God revealed his desire: *"If you refrain from breaking the Sabbath, from taking your own pleasure on my holy day, If you call the*

Sabbath 'Delightful', and the day sacred to Yahweh 'Honorable', If you honor it by abstaining from travel, from seeking your own pleasure and from too much talk, then you will find true happiness in Yahweh, and I shall lead you in triumph over the heights of the land."(Isaiah. 58:13-14—Jerusalem Bible Translation).

This scriptural demand clearly shows that the Sabbath is a day set apart for God, in the sense to deepen our interior life, to grow in our relationship with God. It also tells us that God will not appreciate or approve of a recreational use of the Sabbath. We have no right to utilize the Lord's day to suit our whims and fancies. It is the Lord's; it belongs to God.

(3) Honor the Lord's Day as Day of Rest.

Without forgetting the fact that the Sabbath is the day of the Lord, it is also the day of "rest" for man. God said: "*Six days you may labor and do all work, but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord, your God. No work may be done then either by you, or your son or daughter, or your male or female slave, or by your beast, or by the alien who lives with you.*" (Exodus. 20: 9-10)

Therefore, the Church teaches that "On Sundays and other holy days of obligation the faithful are bound… to abstain from those labors and business concerns which impede the worship to be rendered to God, the joy which is proper to the Lord's Day, or the proper relaxation of mind and body."(ccc 2193)

"God's action is the model for human action. If God *rested and was refreshed* on the seventh day, man too ought to "rest" and should let others rest; especially the poor "be refreshed." The Sabbath brings everyday work to a halt and provides a respite. It is a day of protest against the servitude of work and the worship of money."(ccc. 2172)

The above teachings remind us the real meaning of the Sunday "rest." It does not mean that we can be lazy on a Sunday or do anything we want. Here "rest" means abstinence from those labors and business concerns that impede the worship to be rendered. So, "the institution of the Lord's Day helps everyone enjoy adequate rest and leisure to cultivate their familial, cultural, social and religious lives."(ccc. 2184)

Therefore, when people have a choice to select Sundays to work (perhaps because they may earn more money), it is obviously against the spirit of the Sabbath Law. Also, it is against the Sabbath law to do business on Sundays because on that day the prices and fees are higher due to the non-availability of comparable services. There are millions of poor people who cannot meet their daily needs even if they worked seven days a week. They, however, refrain from Sunday work for respect for God's Law and faith in His providence. We shall not forget that the observance of the Sabbath is to give the first place to God in our lives. Therefore, it certainly demands real sacrifice.

(4) Honor the Lord's Day by good works

The Gospel reports many incidents when Jesus was accused of violating the Sabbath law. But Jesus never failed to respect the holiness of the day. He only gave the Sabbath Law its authentic and authoritative interpretation by saying "The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath." By this declaration he taught that the Sabbath is the day of the Lord of mercies, the day to show the Lord's mercy to fellowmen.

Therefore, great importance should be given to humanitarian works on the Sabbath, without hindering the worship of God. Catechism of the Catholic Church says:

"Sunday is traditionally consecrated by Christian piety to good works and humble service of the sick, the infirm, and the elderly." (ccc 2186).

Hence, we should be very careful in using each moment of the Lord's Day; we shall not waste those most sacred hours of the Holy Sabbath by indulging in things not conducive to this particular day, such as spending too much time on physical rest (proper relaxation is necessary), and sports, idle talk etc. Long travel, except that of emergency nature, shall be done on another day. Instead, make the best use of the time in serving the less fortunate, the sick, the poor and elderly.

(5) Honor the Sabbath by devoting time to one's family

The Church also encourages the faithful to devote some time on the Sabbath for the care of their families. In the modern society, where the family ties are getting weaker and weaker, this aspect of the Sabbath is to be given great importance. Catechism of the Catholic Church says: "Christians will also sanctify Sunday by devoting time and care to their families and relatives, often difficult to do on other days of the week" (ccc 2186).

Special care is to be taken to look after the aged parents and grandparents who live apart. It would be very pleasing to the Lord to eat with them and spend a certain amount of time with them on every Sunday. We shall not forget that they are the close friends of God.

FOURTH COMMANDMENT

"Honor your father and your mother so that you may live long in the land that Yahweh your God is giving you"

Introduction

Love is the fulfillment of the Law (cfr. Rom. 13:10). The Ten Commandments specify how to love. The firs three Commandments (1st table of the Law) tells how to love God, and the last seven (2nd table of the Law) tells how to love neighbor. Just as 1st Commandment is the foundation of 1st table of Law, 4th Commandment is the foundation of the second table of the Law. And Forth Commandment opens the 2nd table of the Law.

"The fourth Commandment shows us the order of charity. God has willed that, after him, we should honor our parents to whom we owe life and who have handed on to us the knowledge of God. We are obliged to honor and respect all those whom God, for our good, has vested with his authority"(ccc2197).

This commandment is primarily meant to protect the dignity and integrity of the family. And this is the only commandment with a promise for those who obey it : " that your days may be prolonged, and that it may go well with you in the land which the Lord your God gives you" (Deut. 5: 16; also Ex. 20:12; Eph 6:1-3).

"The fourth commandment is addressed expressly to children in their relationship to their father and mother… It likewise concerns the ties of kinship between members of the extended family. It requires honor, affection, and gratitude toward elders and ancestors. Finally, it extends to the duties of pupils to teachers, employees to employers, subordinates to leaders, citizens to their country, and to those who administer or govern it. This commandment includes and presupposes the duties of parents, instructors,

teachers, leaders, magistrates, and law enforcement officials, those who govern, all who exercise authority over others or over a community of persons..(CCC 2199).
"*Pay all of them their dues, taxes to whom taxes are due, revenue to whom revenue is due, respect to whom respect is due, honor to whom honor is due"(Rom. 13:7)* –these words of St. Paul reaffirms this.

FAMILY IN GOD'S PLAN

Catechism specifies three essential features: family's essence, origin, and end.

(a) Essence: A man and a woman united in marriage, together with their children form a family (cfr. 2202).
(b) Origin: While the ultimate origin of family is God's design, immediate origin is man and woman freely choosing to create this "one flesh". It is established upon the consent of the spouses (cfr. 2201).
(c) End: Family has two essential ends: Marriage and family are ordered to the good of the spouses, and to the procreation and education of the children.
Therefore, it is obvious that men only or women only or unmarried, or people forced into marriage, who marry without basic good will toward each other, people who refuse ever to have children—all fail in one of the essential features of a family.

CHRISTIAN FAMILY

"The Christian family constitutes a specific revelation and realization of ecclesial communion, and for this reason it can and should be called a *domestic church*." It is a community of faith, hope, and charity; it assumes singular importance in the Church, as is evident in the New Testament (CCC 2204).

'The Christian family is a communion of persons, a sign and image of the communion of the Father and the Son in the Holy Spirit. In the procreation and education of children it reflects the Father's work of creation. It is called to partake of the prayer and sacrifice of Christ. Daily prayer and the reading of the Word of God strengthen it in charity. The Christian family has an evangelizing and missionary task" (CCC 2205).

DUTIES OF FAMILY MEMBERS

(1) Respect

The respect of Children, whether minors or adults is nourished by the natural affection born of the bond uniting them. It is required by God's commandment. Parents are to be respected and loved as representatives of God. "*The divine fatherhood is the source of human fatherhood; this is the foundation of the honor owed to parents*"(CCC. 2214). From this teaching of the Church, it is very clear that our parents are the true representatives of God; their status of father and mother is nothing but a sharing in the parenthood of God. St. Paul mentions it in the letter to the Ephesians: "*This, then, is what I pray, kneeling before the Father, from whom every fatherhood in heaven or on earth, takes its name*" (Eph: 3:14). God, the "I AM"- the source of all life has chosen our parents and appointed them to give us life, to nurture it and finally leading it to eternal life.

(2) Gratitude

Respect for parents derives from gratitude towards those who, by the gift of life, their love and their work have brought their children into the world and enabled them to grow in stature, wisdom and grace. Thus Sirach says: *"With your whole heart honor your father; your mother's birth-pangs forget not. Remember, of these parents you were born; what can you give them for all they gave you?"* (Sir. 7:27-28).

All our obligations to our parents are based on the fact that they are the ones who gave us life. It is them, them alone, that God has chosen to give us His life. Without them we have no life at all. Catechism of the Catholic Church underlines this aspect thus: "Respect for parents derives from gratitude toward those who, by the gift of life, their love and their work, have brought their children into the world and enabled them to grow in stature, wisdom and grace."(CCC 2215). Catechism of the Catholic Church quotes from the book of Sirach to reaffirm this idea "*With all your heart honor your father, and do not forget the birth pangs of your mother. Remember that through your parents you were born; and what can you give back to them that equals theirs to you?*" (Sirach 7: 27-28).

The fact that they gave us life, that alone makes them worthy of our whole- hearted love and respect, even if they weren't the parents they should have been.

Therefore, the love and respect we show to our parents should be worthy of a homage to God himself. As our deep love for the Pope compels us to welcome his representative with great love and respect, fear of the Lord should prompt us to honor our parents with great love. Scripture says: "*He who fears the Lord honors his parents and will serve them as masters who brought him into the world*"(Sirach 3:8).

(3) Obedience

Filial respect is shown by obedience. "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, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord." 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.

As they grow up, children should continue to respect their parents. They should anticipate their wishes, willingly seek their advice, and accept their just admonitions. Obedience toward parents ceases with the emancipation of the children; not so respect, which is always owed to them. This respect has its roots in the fear of God, one of the gifts of the Holy " (ccc 2217).

(4) Support

The fourth commandment reminds grown up children of their responsibilities towards parents. As much as they can they must give them support in old age, in times of illness, and in loneliness and distress. "The fourth commandment reminds grown children of their *responsibilities toward their parents.* As much as they can, they must give them material and moral support in old age and in times of illness, loneliness, or distress. Jesus recalls this duty of gratitude. For the Lord honored the father above the children, and he confirmed the right of the mother over her sons. Whoever honors his

father atones for sins, and whoever glorifies his mother is like one who lays up treasure. Whoever honors his father will be gladdened by his own children, and when he prays he will be heard. Whoever glorifies his father will have long life, and whoever obeys the Lord will refresh his mother. O son, help your father in his old age, and do not grieve him as long as he lives; even if he is lacking in understanding, show forbearance; in all your strength do not despise him.... Whoever forsakes his father is like a blasphemer, and whoever angers his mother is cursed by the Lord" (CCC 2218).

SINS AGAINST FOURTH COMMANDMENT.

1) Disobedience

Disobedience, sign of lack of love towards parents

Catechism of the Catholic Church says: "*filial* respect is shown by true docility and obedience"(CCC 2216). God says, through the Book of Proverbs: "*My son, keep your father's commandment, and forsake not your mother's teaching. Bind them upon your heart always; tie them about your neck. When you walk, they will lead you; when you lie down, they will watch over you; and when you awake, they will talk with you.*"(Proverbs. 6:20-22). Obedience is the best form of expressing our love towards parents. It is the real sign of our affection and attachment to them.

Obedience in all matters is necessary.

Obedience in all matters is what is required from children. Catechism of the Catholic Church clarifies it thus: "… the child should obey his parents in all that they ask of him when it is for his good or that of the family"(CCC 2217). St. Paul reminds us that obedience in everything is what pleases God: " *Children, obey your parents in everything, for this is pleasing to the Lord*" (Col. 3: 20).It is easy to obey those matters, which seem reasonable to us, but we disobey those things, which are difficult or unacceptable to us. It is here that we violate this commandment. Obedience in all matters is what is demanded by the fourth commandment. But this is not applicable in matters that are morally wrong. Obedience in those matters, which may seem un-reasonable, will only make us wise, because that is what the Scripture. "*A wise son hears his father's instruction, but a scoffer does not listen to rebuke*" (Proverbs 13:1). When we obey joyfully their "unwise orders", we will become really wise

2. Disrespect

The Catechism goes on to add "As they grow up, children should continue to respect their parents. They should anticipate their wishes, willingly seek their advice, and accept their admonitions. Obedience towards parents ceases with the emancipation of the children; not so respect which is always owed to them"(CCC 2217).

Blessings for respecting the Parents.

The Scripture gives many blessings for those who respect their parents:

"*Whoever honors his father atones for sins*" (Sirach 3:3).

"*Whoever honors his father will be gladdened by his own children, and when he prays he will be heard*"(Sirach 3:5).
"*For a man's glory comes from honoring his father*"(Sirach 3:11a).

Severe punishments for disrespect to parents

Any disrespect to the parents will be considered seriously and the punishment for it is frightening: "*The eye that mocks a father and scorns to obey a mother will be picked out by the ravens of the valley and eaten by the vultures*".(Proverbs 30:17).

There are so many ways we show disrespect to our parents:

a) Disrespectful actions.

The Bible says that, *"He who does violence to his father and chases away his mother is a son who causes shame and brings reproach"*(Proverbs: 19:26). Ill-treating the parents by physically attacking them or fighting against them or doing any action that is disrespectful is grave: "*The eye that mocks a father and scorns to obey a mother will be picked out by the ravens of the valley and eaten by the vultures*".(Proverbs 30:17). "*Whoever forsakes his father is like a blasphemer, and whoever angers his mother is cursed by the Lord*"(Sirach 3:16).

b) Disrespectful words.

The Bible says: "*Whoever curses his father or mother will have his lamp put out in the deepest darkness*"(Proverbs 20:20). Disrespectful words are as grave as disrespectful actions. Such words will create deep wounds in their hearts, which may remain until their death, constantly making them sad. Remember the Scripture: " *A blow from a whip raises a welt, but a blow from the tongue smashes bones; Many have fallen by the edge of the sword, but not as many as by the tongue… Dire is the death it inflicts*"(Sirach. 28: 17-18, 21).

c) Ignoring the wishes of parents.

Besides their commands, genuine love for parents takes into consideration their wishes also. The Catechism of the Catholic Church specifically mentions the duty of the grown up children to anticipate the wishes of their parents(cfr.ccc.2217). Since our parents literally sacrificed their whole life for us, they have the right to get their just wishes to be fulfilled.

d) Negligence in seeking their advice and accepting their just admonitions

Parents are the first teachers appointed by God himself to give us the advice necessary for our training. Even though they are not very knowledgeable persons, God's plan to guide you is through them. Because, as far as the children are concerned, parents are representatives of God who is the Wisdom. Even if the children are old enough, and their parents are too old, God will continue to do this work of imparting his wisdom through them. Therefore, by ignoring their advice or not willingly seeking their will, we are ignoring God's ways.

3. Negligence in meeting the physical needs.

Remember our childhood, when we were unable to meet our physical needs how affectionately and sincerely our parents took care of us! When they are unable to take care of themselves effectively, due to sickness or old age or financial difficulty, how much are we indebted to help them? The following Scripture will tell us how much God is worried and anxious about our old parents of their needs and how much God expects us , we children to help them: " *My son, take care of your father when he is old; grieve him not as long as he lives"* (Sirah. 3: 12). Here, it is very clear that God entrusts the children the whole responsibility of taking care of their parents.

Church teaches thus: "The fourth commandment reminds grown children of their responsibilities toward their parents. *As much as they can*, they must give them material and moral support in old age and in times of illness, loneliness, or distress. Jesus recalls this duty of gratitude" (CCC 2218).

If the denial of loving service to the hungry, the thirsty, the homeless, the naked, the sick and those in prison would be counted as refusal to help Jesus himself. ("*Then he will say to those at his left hand, 'Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels; for I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me no drink, I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not clothe me.' Then they also will answer, 'Lord, when did we see thee hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to thee?' Then he will answer them, 'Truly, I say to you, as you did it not to one of the least of these, you did it not to me*' (Matthew 25:41-45)). Those who denied such help will be sent to eternal fire and how much more serious will it be to deny this help to our own parents. Will these alarming words from St. Matthew's gospel not be more applicable in the case of parents? More so, because they are the official representatives of God!

God reminds us that any merciful act towards parents will be rewarded abundantly. "*For kindness to a father will not be forgotten, and against your sins it will be credited to you; in the day of your affliction it will be remembered in your favor; as frost in fair weather, your sins will melt away. Whoever forsakes his father is like a blasphemer"* (Sirach 3: 14-15, 16a).

Notice how Jesus speaks against using religious laws to mistreat one's parents: " *For Moses said, 'Honor your father and mother,' and 'Whoever curses father or mother shall die'. Yet you say 'If a man tells his father or his mother, what you would have gained from me is Corban (that is, given to God)'-then you no longer permit him to do anything for his father or mother. You nullify the Word of God in favour of tradition you have handed on"* " (Mk. 7:10—13). How powerfully the following Scripture tells that the adult children should provide for their elderly and helpless parents with a generous heart. "*Hearken to your father who begot you, and do not despise your mother when she is old*"(Proverb. 23: 22). " *A man who robs his parents and says 'Nothing wrong in that' is no better than a murderer* (Proverbs. 28: 24).

Hence, negligence in taking care of their food, neglect in their medications, neglect in their hygiene and other physical needs are grave faults.

4. Negligence in meeting their spiritual needs

Desire for God and spiritual things will be more in old age. And that is the fundamental thirst of the soul too. Jesus reminds us thus: "*human beings live not on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.*"(Matthew 4:4). We

shall not forget that it is our parents who taught us how to pray; it is they who took us to church; it is they who led us to God. Now, when they are in need of spiritual food the most, is it not ingratitude to disregard their desire for it?

Negligence in taking them to the Mass, negligence in making arrangements for confession and the sacrament of the sick, negligence in praying with them to help them to pray, negligence in reading to them from the Scripture, negligence in fostering faith and hope in them in their times of serious sickness, negligence in preparing them for a graceful death by prudently giving them insights of eternal joy, etc. are in fact serious failures from our part.

5 Negligence in helping the parents after their death.

It is not justice to forget our parents once they are out of our sight. If they were in the ICU or CCU how much care we would have taken? Even though they have died, they did not cease to exist. They only passed to eternity. Who knows they have reached the abode of God. There is no doubt that our God is so merciful; but most of the saints are of opinion that it is unusual to reach heaven without going through a thorough purification. Justice demands that because god is pure holiness. In that case, they are suffering much more after their death than while they were in the ICU or CCU. If so, how much more we need to help them after their death by offering special Mass for them, by offering mortifications and penance for them, by praying for God's mercy to them, by giving alms for them, etc?

It is to be noted how the Bible extols the Jewish leader Judas' act of taking initiative to offer sacrifices for the soldiers who died in the battle: " *He then took up a collection among al his soldiers, amounting to two thousand silver drachmas, which he sent to Jerusalem to provide for an expiatory sacrifice. In doing this he acted in a very excellent and noble way, in as much as he had the resurrection of the dead in view*"(II Maccabees 12: 43).

Besides the failure towards parents, disobedience and disrespect to the grand parents is also very serious.

6 **Disobedience and disrespect to the Clergy**.

Just like our parents give us physical life, the priests (or Deacons) give us new birth to divine life by baptism. As our parents work hard to gives us food for our body, the priests(or deacons) work hard by studying, meditating, and praying the Scriptures to feed us with the Word of God in a digestive manner. To perpetuate the sacrifice of the Cross—the means of our salvation—through out the centuries, thereby, making it available for you, the priests have consecrated their whole life for you. Again, they give you the forgiveness of your sins in the name of the Triune God, which no one else can give. They even give you the 'Viaticum'—the food for your journey home (to eternity)—and the final blessing at your deathbed.

If so, how much we are indebted to the clergy? Moreover, God has asked us to have a spiritual relationship with the priests by seeking directions from them: " *For the lips of the priests are to keep knowledge, and instruction is to be sought from his mouth, because he is the messenger of the Lord of hosts".* (Malachi. 2:7).Hence, lack of filial love towards the priests, disobedience and disrespect to the priests, deacons, and catechists, etc are violations of the fourth Commandment.

DUTIES OF PARENTS

The following are the main duties :

(1) Moral education and spiritual formation: "The fecundity of conjugal love cannot be reduced solely to the procreation of children, but must extend to their moral education and their spiritual formation. "The *role of parents in education* is of such importance that it is almost impossible to provide an adequate substitute." The right and the duty of parents to educate their children are primordial and inalienable" (2221).

(2) They must regard them as children of God and human persons: Parents must regard their children as *children of God* and respect them as *human persons.* Showing themselves obedient to the will of the Father in heaven, they educate their children to fulfill God's law" (2222).

(3) They should discipline, but not provoke children: "*Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up with the training and instruction of the Lord*" (Eph. 6:4).

(4) They should evangelize children: "Through the grace of the sacrament of marriage, parents receive the responsibility and privilege of evangelizing their children"(CCC 2225).

(5) They shall not exert pressure in taking decisions on important matters of life, but influence in it: "When they become adults, children have the right and duty to *choose their profession and state of life.* They should assume their new responsibilities within a trusting relationship with their parents, willingly asking and receiving their advice and counsel. Parents should be careful not to exert pressure on their children either in the choice of a profession or in that of a spouse. This necessary restraint does not prevent them - quite the contrary from giving their children judicious advice, particularly when they are planning to start a family"(2230).

(6) They must give them good example: "Parents have the first responsibility for the education of their children. They bear witness to this responsibility first by *creating a home* where tenderness, forgiveness, respect, fidelity, and disinterested service are the rule. The home is well suited for *education in the virtues.* This requires an apprenticeship in self-denial, sound judgment, and self-mastery - the preconditions of all true freedom. Parents should teach their children to subordinate the "material and instinctual dimensions to interior and spiritual ones." Parents have a grave responsibility to give good example to their children. By knowing how to acknowledge their own failings to their children, parents will be better able to guide and correct them" (2223).

Sins against the Fourth Commandment from the part of Parents

Catechism of the Catholic Church teaches thus: "The fecundity of conjugal love cannot be reduced solely to the procreation of children, but must extend to their moral education and their spiritual formation. The role of parents in education is of such importance that it is impossible to provide an adequate substitute. The right and duty of parents to educate their children are primordial and inalienable " (CCC 2221).

The following are the violations from the part of the parents

1) **Disrespect to Children**

The children belong to God. They are primarily God's children. Hence, not respecting them as children of God is a grave failure. Hence the Bible admonishes: "*Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.*" (Ephesians 6:4).

2) **Failure in creating a welcoming home and a suitable place for teaching virtues.**

Parents must create a welcoming home, a "haven" where their children can experience warmth, love, respect, forgiveness and a spirit of unselfish service. It is necessary to create a suitable environment in the home where tenderness, forgiveness, respect, fidelity, and selfless service is the rule, and it is necessary.

3) Not giving a good example

"Parents have a grave responsibility to give good examples to their children" (CCC 2223). By leading a selfish, lazy, materialistic and luxurious life, showing hot temper, inability to forgive, lack of humility to acknowledge their own failures – these are acts of bad examples from the part of the parents. This will have a dangerous impact on the values and lives of the children.

Running after riches will always have a negative impact on the children, even though they may enjoy the wealth their parents amassed. Yielding to the worldly values of seeking first the things of the world rather than God is seriously wrong.

4) **Negligence in the spiritual formation of the children.**

The Church teaches that: "Through the grace of the sacrament of marriage, parents receive the responsibility and privilege of evangelizing their children"(CCC 2225). See how much the Scripture emphasizes the need for it: "*He who loves his son will whip him often, in order that he may rejoice at the way he turns out. He who disciplines his son will profit by him, and will boast of him among acquaintances*"(Sirach 30:1-2).

A couple of areas are given below for consideration:

a) <u>Negligence in teaching and training the children to overcome sinful instincts:</u>

"Parents should teach their children to subordinate the "material and instinctual dimensions to interior and spiritual ones"(CCC 2223)

b) <u>Negligence in warning the children against imitating the worldly value:</u>

"Parents should teach children to avoid the compromising and degrading influences which threaten human societies." (CCC 2224). The home must be the child's first school of fervor. There he must be taught to love God and hate 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 influences from outside the home- the books, films, companions, amusements, etc.

Parents are bound to correct their children in justice and prudence. Remember what Scripture says about it:"*He that loveth his son frequently chastiseth*

him"(Ecclesiastes 30:1)."*Pamper your child and he will terrorize you, play along with him and he will bring you sorrow*"(Sirach 30:9)

c) Negligence in home catechesis

"Parents should initiate their children at an early age into the mysteries of the faith of which they are the "first heralds" for their children."(CCC 2225)

d) Negligence in associating them with the life of the Church.

Parents should associate their children, from their most tender years, with the life of the Church.

e) Negligence in helping to grow in faith by living the gospel.

Parents should help children grow in faith by the witness of a Christian life in keeping with the gospel.

f) Negligence in teaching the children to pray

Parents are the most suitable persons to teach the children to pray. This is effectively done firstly by their own solid prayer life, and secondly by training them how to converse with God. "Parents have the mission of teaching their children to pray and to discover their vocation as children of God"(CCC 2226)

g) Negligence in choosing an appropriate school

"As far as possible parents have the duty of choosing schools that will best help them in their task as Christian educators" (CCC 2229)

h) Negligence in helping the adult children in choosing their profession and state of life.

Parents should acknowledge that when their children become adults, children have the right and duty to choose their profession and state of life. "They should assume their new responsibilities within a trusting relationship with their parents, willingly asking and receiving their advice and counsel. Parents should be careful not to exert pressure on their children either in the choice of a profession or in that of a spouse"(CCC 2230)

i) Discouraging the vocation to consecrated life.

Family ties are important but not absolute. Just as the child grows to maturity and human and spiritual autonomy, so his unique vocation which comes from God asserts more clearly and forcefully. Parents should respect this call and encourage their children to follow it. They must be convinced that the first vocation of the Christian is to *follow Jesus*. "*He who loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; and he who loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me;*"(CCC 2232, see also, Matthew 10:37)

"Parents should welcome and respect with joy and thanksgiving the Lord's call to one of their children to follow him in virginity for the sake of the Kingdom in the consecrated life or in priestly ministry"(CCC 2233)

Sins against the Fourth Commandment from the part of Civil Authorities

"Those who exercise authority should do so as a service. "Whoever would be great among you must be your servant". The exercise of authority is measured morally in terms of its divine origin, its reasonable nature and its specific object. No one can command or establish what is contrary to the dignity of persons and the natural law."(CCC 2235).

They should administer and distribute justice wisely, and work for civic peace and harmony; "Political authorities are obliged to respect the fundamental rights of the human person" (CCC 2237)

Sins against the Fourth Commandment from the part of Citizens

a) Disrespect for public authorities

The Catechism of the Catholic Church says "Those subject to authority should regard those in authority as representatives of God, who has made them stewards of his gifts;"(CCC 2238)

b) Negligence in building up the society by exercising the right to vote, etc.

"Submission to authority and co-responsibility for the common good make it morally obligatory to pay taxes, to exercise the right to vote, and to defend one's country" (CCC 2240).

c) Failure in disobeying the directives contrary to moral law

"The citizen is obliged in conscience not to follow the directives of civil authorities when they are contrary to the demands of moral order, to the fundamental rights of the persons or the teachings of the gospel. *Refusing obedience* to civil authorities, when their demands are contrary to those of an upright conscience, finds its justification in the distinction between serving God and serving the political community. "Render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's." "We must obey God rather than men"