

Message From The Pastor

March 18, 2021

“You Shalt Not Make The Name Of The Lord God In Vain.” (Deut. 5)

Blasphemy is the purposeful use of the holy name of God in an offensive manner. The misuse of the holy name, “inwardly or outwardly, is attaching the name of God to words of hatred, reproach or defiance. That is gravely sinful. (Catechism #2148).

Ponder the following: In Hebrew, the holy name of God consists of four letters YHWH. To safeguard against blasphemy, our Jewish brothers and sisters absolutely refuse to spell the name at all! So sacred is the name of God!

A true story: At a local parish, I was with a large group of teenagers practicing for the soon to occur Confirmation Mass with our bishop. As we rehearsed the mass, I stood at the place which the bishop would stand as he confirmed each teen. Part of the *Ritual of Confirmation* is to ask each person, “What name do you choose?” This question is asked by the bishop immediately prior to his confirming the person with the sacred chrism.

During the aforementioned practice, as one of the teenagers, whom was not from any country in which you ordinarily find males with the name of the Lord, approached me. As the bishop planned to ask, “What name do you choose?” With a mischievous smile on his face, he responded loudly, “Jesus.” I replied, “What!...you cannot select that name. It is a holy name...the name of the Lord.” He answered defiantly, “I want to have the name of Jesus.” “No, on Confirmation Day select another name,” I said.

On Confirmation Day, I was standing next to the bishop as he was confirming the teens, one after another. Then, my good friend arrived in front of the bishop to be confirmed. “What name do you choose?” asked the bishop. My friend looked at me very quickly. I looked at him with some fear. Will he respond with the Holy Name or not? Will he create a moment of embarrassment? Will my friend misuse the Holy Name for his unsuitable purpose? After what seemed like forever, he answered the bishop, “Michael.” I was relieved. No hint of blasphemy!

Each of us, no matter what is our vocation in this world, has an obligation to “cultivate a persistent reverence for the Holy Name of our Lord (U.S. Catholic Catechism for Adults, page 355).” If you have a mild tendency to break the second commandment either in anger or in any other manner, make an effort to correct the bad habit. It does require discipline. But, you can do so by considering how much it would hurt you, if someone abused the name of a beloved spouse or child of yours.

Holy God, we praise thy name!

Peace

Fr. Marc