

March 7, 2021 The Ten Commandments Homily: “The Lord said to Moses, ‘Come up to me on the mountain and, while you are there, I will give you the stone tablets on which I have written the commandments intended for their instruction.’”

A story: At dinner, a rather obnoxious and pompous society lady was seated next to a rabbi. Hoping to impress him, she said, “Rabbi, One of my ancestors signed the Declaration of Independence”. The rabbi grinned. “Very impressive indeed”, he replied. After a moment’s pause, he added, “One of my ancestors wrote the Ten Commandments”.

Brothers and sisters, have we ceased to take God seriously? Do we live our daily life as if God and his revealed word did not matter? Have we forgotten the Ten Commandments? How many of us can recite the Ten Commandments?

For too many in our secular leaning culture, God is irrelevant. We are indifferent to his revealed word. We can no longer distinguish between time honored teachings of virtue and vice, truth and falsehood, and good and evil. Truth is relative. There is no longer any appeal to the Divine Law, the Sermon on the Mount or even the natural law. Our universities are dominated by socially progressive Marxists and Atheists.

For many generations, most Christians knew the Ten Commandments from memory. In the days of our youth we were each instructed in the commandments and told to memorize them. Before going to confession, we first reviewed the Commandments to determine if sin had been committed. Most of us are familiar with the biblical epic film, “*The Ten Commandments*”, featuring the American actor Charlton Heston in the role of Moses.

Today, it is illegal to display the Ten Commandments in our public schools. More recently, the Ten Commandments were removed from an Alabama courthouse by order of a federal judge. Yet, let it be noted that carved in the wall of the Supreme Court in our nation’s capitol is the figure of Moses holding the two tablets of the Law, the Ten Commandments in his hands!

For many generations the Ten Commandments have served as the moral and legal foundation of society. Their validity is timeless.

Christ, our Lord acknowledged the Commandments. He fulfilled the Commandments by obeying them perfectly. Indeed, he enjoined his disciples to keep them. “If you love me, you will keep my commandments”.

Regrettably, citizens of the Western world tend to view the Commandments negatively as something that restricts them. In a cartoon that appeared in “*The New Yorker*” magazine some years ago, Moses is depicted at the foot of Mount Sinai holding the two tablets of the Law in his hands. A large group of Jews have gathered around him. One of them, an atheist, raises his hand. He says, “Are we allowed to make comments?”

Do we also protest?

Historically, the Jews have viewed the Commandments positively. God's law liberated them from a life of slavery to sin for a life of service to God. The Commandments offer them the path to freedom.

In the words of Peter Kreeft, "the Commandments protect freedom as the fence around a city schoolyard protects children from life threatening dangers (kidnapping, predators, and cars) and frees them to play and enjoy their games within that fence."

Any society needs order, laws and rules. Without them chaos ensues and more people suffer the tragic consequences.

Finally, it must be underscored that the Commandments of God are not suggestions or guidelines. God expects us to honor them in our daily life.

Let us all heed the word of God!

Amen!