

Those who love God with their whole hearts and follow his ways do not need a set of rules written down on stone tablets. The commandments are already “implanted in their hearts and in their souls. That is, they loved the God who made them and did nothing unjust against their neighbor.”<sup>i</sup>

Man has a way of thinking he is superior to others. He can set the rules for himself. He does not need God. We see this time and again throughout history. This was the case thousands of years ago when God revealed himself to the chosen people. “When this righteousness and love for God had passed into oblivion and had been extinguished in Egypt, God had necessarily to reveal himself through his own voice, out of his great love for men.” Moses led the Israelites out of slavery in Egypt following God’s call. And on Mount Horeb, God wrote the commandments on stone tablets to help guide his people out of slavery to sin.<sup>ii</sup>

We see man’s rebellion against God and his commandments throughout history. What might God write on stone tablets for this generation to lead us out of slavery to sin?

**THE FIRST COMMANDMENT: BELIEVE IN THE TRUE GOD** – Secularism destroys human dignity. Only the Gospel of Jesus Christ will bring the justice and peace so needed by the world. Believe in the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be.

**THE SECOND COMMANDMENT: REVERENCE GOD’S NAME** - The name of God deserves the highest honor and respect. The Lord commands us to reverence his name and not to use it in a disrespectful or manipulative way. When Jesus taught the Our Father, his first petition was “Hallowed be thy name.” Blessed be God. Blessed be his holy Name.

**THE THIRD COMMANDMENT: LOVE THE LORD’S DAY** – “Every human person, having been created by God, owes him worship and thanksgiving for what the Lord has done and continues to do.”<sup>iii</sup> The Lord has given us a day of rest to refresh our hearts, minds, and souls. The Author of time guides us to use our time most effectively as we honor the Lord who has given us life and seeks for us to share Eternity with him. Sunday is a day for the deeper “work” of contemplation and the restful act of loving God. “This is the day the LORD has made, let us rejoice and be glad in it” (Ps 118:24).

**THE FOURTH COMMANDMENT: STRENGTHEN YOUR FAMILY** – A family prays together, engages in lifelong learning, forgives one another, serves each other, welcomes others, affirms and celebrates life, and brings justice and mercy to the community. Living in this way, the family members help each other live and grow in faith. This Commandment also includes the responsibility of the state and society to foster family values and to strengthen the family in every possible way. Father, we bless, and we thank you for brightening our communion of love by your gift of children.

**THE FIFTH COMMANDMENT: PROMOTE THE CULTURE OF LIFE** – “Human life is sacred because from its beginning it involves the creative action of God and it remains forever in a special relationship with the Creator, who is its sole end. God alone is the Lord of life from its beginning until its end: no one can under any circumstance claim for himself the right directly to destroy an innocent human being” (CCC 2258, *Donum Vitae* #5). Lord, make me an instrument of your peace. Where there is hatred, let me sow love.

**THE SIXTH COMMANDMENT: MARITAL FIDELITY** - God created human beings as male and female. In so doing, he gave equal dignity to both man and woman. In his plan, men and women should respect and accept their sexual identity. God created both the body and sex as good. Hence, we do not approach sexuality with fear or with hostility to the flesh. It is a gift of God by which men and women participate in his saving plan and respond to his call to grow in

holiness. A man and a woman are called into a holy union by God for their good and for the good of children. This is God's plan to renew the face of the earth.

"Father, to reveal the plan of your love, you made the union of husband and wife an image of the covenant between you and your people. In the fulfillment of this sacrament, the marriage of Christian man and woman is a sign of the marriage between Christ and the Church" (From the Nuptial Blessing).

**THE SEVENTH COMMANDMENT: ACT JUSTLY** – To keep this Commandment, we need to acquire the virtues of moderation in our possessions, justice in our treatment of others, respect for their human dignity, and solidarity with all peoples. Moderation curbs our attachment to worldly goods and restrains our appetite for consumerism. Justice helps us respect our neighbor's rights and be interested in their human well-being. Solidarity opens our hearts to identifying with the whole human family, reminding us of our common humanity.

"Father ... teach us to see Christ in the lives we touch and to offer him living worship by love-filled service to our brothers and sisters" (Collect Solemnity of the Sacred Heart).

**THE EIGHTH COMMANDMENT: TELL THE TRUTH** – "Truth or truthfulness is the virtue which consists in showing oneself true in deeds and truthful in words, and guarding against duplicity, dissimulation, and hypocrisy.... Respect for the reputation and honor of persons forbids all detraction and calumny in word or attitude" (CCC, 2505 & 2507).

In our culture, relativism challenges our ability to tell the truth because it claims there is no objective truth. In such an atmosphere, even Christ's teachings, based on divine truth, fail to persuade those who place a higher value on their subjective truth over and above objective truth. "Integrity requires that we allow our faith to shape every aspect of life, public as well as private."

Lord God Almighty, look with favor on your servants who use the technology discovered by long research. Enable us to communicate truth, to foster love, and to uphold justice and right.

**THE NINTH COMMANDMENT: PRACTICE PURITY OF HEART** – Modesty is a virtue necessary for purity of heart. A modest person dresses, speaks, and acts in a manner that supports and encourages purity and chastity. Modesty protects the mystery of the person in order to avoid exploiting the other. This attitude instills in us the patience and reserve we need for avoiding unbecoming behavior. Modesty ensures and supports purity of heart, a gift that enables us to see God's plan for personal relationships, sexuality, and marriage.

Lord, set aflame my heart and my entire being with the fire of the Holy Spirit, that I may serve you with a chaste body and pure mind.

**THE TENTH COMMANDMENT: EMBRACE POVERTY OF SPIRIT** - The first step on the road to joy begins with a healthy detachment from material goods. Practicing the virtues of poverty of spirit and generosity of heart liberate us from being slaves to money and possessions. They enable us to have a preferential love for the poor and to be witnesses of justice and peace in the world. They also enable us to adopt a simplicity of life that frees us from consumerism and helps us preserve God's creation. "We know that all things work for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose" (Rom 8:28).

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<sup>i</sup> From the treatise *Against Heresies* by Saint Irenaeus, (Lib. 4, 16, 2-5: SC 100, 564-572)

<sup>ii</sup> Ibid.

<sup>iii</sup> United States Catholic Catechism for Adults. United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. See Chapters 25-34 for a fuller discussion of all the Commandments. For all 10 Commandments, the text is quoted extensively without specific attribution in many cases.