

# **Obedience**

The first commandment in the decalogue, after the three, which deal with man's duties to God, is that

which reads: Honor thy father and thy mother. There is a reason for its being mentioned at the head of the

list of those, which comprise man's duties to his fellowman. The reason is that, in the order of nature, a

human being's first relationships are toward the parents who were responsible for his coming into the

world and on whom he is dependent through many helpless years.

The law of obedience, in regard to children, is really a law of self-preservation. When the child is born, it is incapable of caring for itself in any way. Its helplessness and dependence, in somewhat diminishing degree, continue for many years.

Unless others provide for its physical needs, its intellectual needs, its moral and spiritual needs, it will never reach perfect maturity. This dependence can be made fruitful and effective unto self-preservation and development only by obedience, respect, honor and love toward those whose responsibility it is to provide for the child.

But children are not the only ones on whom the obligation of obedience falls. Whenever there is a necessary dependence of one man upon another, either in the natural or supernatural order, they are obligations of obedience.

Thus, in the natural order, the citizen owes obedience to the state; the workman to his employer, the pupil to the teacher.

Accordingly, in the supernatural order, the parishioner owes obedience to the pastor, and the religious to his superiors.

Indirectly, obedience also imposes obligations on those who hold authority to direct and command others.

There is a right use of authority and a wrong use; it can be neglected or abused to the detriment of subjects. Therefore,

every form of obedience involves obligations on the part of those in command. The sins of both subjects and superiors are therefore outlined here.

## **I. Mortal Sins**

1. Have I deliberately given in to hatred of my mother or my father, refusing to speak to them over a considerable period of time?

2. Have I deliberately wished serious harm to my parents, e.g., that they would die so that I might possess their goods?

3. Have I habitually treated my parents harshly, speaking contemptuously to them or of them, ridiculing them, cursing them, causing them severe pain and sorrow?

4. Have I refused to relieve the serious needs of my parents when I was able to do so, leaving them dependent on strangers for necessary food, clothing, or without medical care in sickness and danger of death?

5. Have I done nothing to insure spiritual care for my mother or father when it was needed, neglecting to provide for their receiving the Sacraments in danger of death?
6. Have I, as a lawyer or politician or influential businessman, used my power to break down or render useless just laws of the state made for the welfare of all?
7. Have I purposely struck my mother or father in resentment or deliberate bad will?
8. Have I disobeyed parents when they forbade my going with bad companions, or to bad shows and dangerous places?
9. Have I, as an official of the state, seriously failed in my duty by accepting bribes, permitting corruption, letting criminals off, etc.?
10. Have I, as a parishioner, fomented rebellion and disobedience among the people of a parish, by slander, conspiracy, etc., against my pastor?
11. Have I upset the home of my parents by frequently disobeying the rules they had a right to make make—concerning the persons to be brought into the house, concerning the hours I kept at night, concerning decent conduct within the home?
12. Have I, when earning money while living under the parental roof or while still subject to parents, refused to give them part of my earnings when they needed it or demanded it?

13. Have I, as a parent, given in to deliberate hatred of a son or daughter, by continual mistreatment, cursing, driving them out of my home without a serious reason?
14. Have I failed entirely to teach and discipline my children in serious matters such as morality and religion?
15. Have I, with deliberate and grave carelessness, endangered the life of a child, either by seriously dangerous conduct before birth, or by neglect of proper attention through the years of infancy?
16. Have I failed to have my child baptized at least within two weeks or thereabouts after birth, when there was no serious obstacle to so doing?
17. Have I given serious bad example to my children, by cursing in their presence, by serious quarreling, by impure talk, by neglecting serious religious obligations?
18. Have I failed to correct and punish my children for serious wrongs, or to forbid them to enter serious occasions of sin?
19. Have I refused to send my children to a Catholic school when I could have done so and had no permission from bishop or pastor to do otherwise?
20. Have I selfishly interfered with the vocation of a son or daughter when God seemed to be calling them to marriage or to a religious vocation and I had no serious reason for refusing to let them go?
21. Have I, as a pupil in school, seriously undermined the authority and harmed the work of my teacher by slander,

rebellion, etc.?

22. Have I, as a teacher, seriously neglected my duties by failing to prepare myself in any way for my classes, by not teaching subjects I was hired to teach, etc.?

23. Have I, as an employee, failed to a grave degree in carrying out commands of an employer for which I was hired, or fomented rebellion and disobedience and sabotage among others?

24. Have I, as an employer, been seriously unjust to one or many of my employees, by driving them tyrannically, by demanding more than human nature could do, by allowing inhumane working conditions?

## **II. Venial Sins**

1. Have I failed to show love and gratitude to my parents, either by neglecting opportunities to do

so, or by positively hurting them in small ways?

2. Have I failed in the respect due my parents, by laughing at them, being openly ashamed of them, talking harshly or

or angrily to them, saying unkind things about them?

3. Have I disobeyed my parents in small things that they commanded or forbade?

4. Have I lied to my parents to avoid a reprimand or punishment?

5. Have I been stubborn and peevish and openly resentful against parents?

6. Have I neglected to ask or take advice from parents in matters in which their knowledge and experience are meant to guide me?

7. Have I selfishly refused to make life more comfortable and enjoyable for my parents when I could have done so?

8. Have I, in my own mature years, left my parents alone, seldom visiting them, seldom showing any gratitude or love?

9. As a parent, have I slothfully neglected the lesser duties I owed to my children, such as taking an interest in their school work, explaining difficult religious matters to them, encouraging extra habits of piety?

10. Have I given bad example to my children in venial matters, by anger, gossip, lying, etc.?

11. Have I failed to cooperate with teachers of my children by criticizing them to the children, countermanding some of their orders, etc.?

12. Have I, as a pupil in school, been disrespectful and disobedient to teachers?

13. Have I, as a teacher, given bad example to pupils, or failed to prepare well for my classes, or to fulfill minor obligations I assumed?

14. Have I, as an employee, been disobedient to just orders given by my employer, thus causing slight losses?

15. Have I, as an employer, given way to anger, partiality, and unfairness in dealing with my employees?

16. Have I, as a citizen, disregarded laws made for the safety and well being of all, or ridiculed those in authority who made the laws?