

Chapter 28: 4th Commandment

“Christians had the illusion that the culture was theirs. Now they know it’s not. Jews never had that illusion.” (Rabbi Nowak)

These commandments are a dialogue that God initiates – now I have to decide how to respond.

* / shall not...

The Hebrew “you” is singular – “You shall not...” – it is not “Y’all” – it is very direct to each one of us.

* Exodus 20 - “Honor your father and your mother, that you may have a long life in the land which the LORD, your God, is giving you.”

* Deuteronomy 5 - “Honor your father and your mother, as the LORD, your God, has commanded you, that you may have a long life and prosperity in the land which the LORD, your God, is giving you.”

The 4th commandment opens the second tablet of the Decalogue, revealing that love of neighbor extends in a *primary* way to our parents. It highlights the sacredness of the family, which God created as the primary unit of society.

* why some outside forces are trying so hard to destroy it

The family is the school for proper moral education where all members learn the spiritual values and ethical principles (love, respect) and where we learn about other societal relationships.

Parents should provide a welcoming home, a haven where children can experience warmth, love, respect, forgiveness, acceptance – *safety*. Children owe parents gratitude for the gift of life, respect and obedience as long as they live in their parents’ home. Brothers and sisters should contribute to family unity by treating each other respectfully and lovingly.

* No “I didn’t ask to be born!”

* Prodigal son (Lk 15:11-32)

* We tend to treat those closest to us worse than we treat strangers

Parents should respect their adult children as unique persons in their own right

* not living vicariously through their children

Grown children should help with the physical and spiritual needs of their parents in times of illness, loneliness, and old age.

* “Qorban” (Mark 7:11)

Chapter 29: 5th Commandment

The 5th Commandment refers to the deliberate murder of an innocent person, actions that directly and intentionally kill the innocent. The Old Testament teaches that murder arises out of anger and envy – two of the Seven Deadly Sins.

Murder

Both Exodus 20 and Deuteronomy 5 - “You shall not kill.”

- * Eccl. 3:3 – “A time to kill, and a time to heal”...
- * 1 Kings 11:24 – “(Rezon) gathered men to himself and became leader of a marauding band, after David slew them...”
- * Gen. 4:8 – “... And when they were in the field, Cain rose up against his brother Abel, and killed him.”

The first murder recorded in the Scriptures is in the first book of the Bible: the murder of Abel by his brother Cain (Gen. 4). Why? Because he was angry at God and envious of his brother.

Self-defense is morally permissible when, as a last resort, a person is protecting his/her own life or another's life. In legitimate self-defense, one only intends the effect of saving one's life against an unjust aggressor – the killing of the assailant is not willed, only permitted.

Abortion

Direct abortion is a grave violation of the 5th Commandment. Since the dawn of Christian history, the Church has insisted that human life is sacred and must be respected and protected from the moment of conception. Church teaching has not changed and cannot change.

- * 4D ultrasound technology
- * baby has a heartbeat 18 days from conception
- * general dehumanization of people (not just the Nazis)

The National Catholic Bioethics Center (ncbcenter.org)

In Vitro Fertilization

- * “In vitro” = “in glass”

Stem Cell Research and Cloning

Prenatal procedures engaged in for medical experimentation that treats the embryo as disposable “biological material,” or genetic manipulation are all seriously wrong.

- * Sea turtle eggs buried in the sand – become turtles
- * Human embryo in the womb becomes... ?

Euthanasia and Physician-Assisted Suicide

The “quality of life” phrase is a moving target – more and more not because people are dying but because they are afraid of suffering – or afraid of “being a burden” – we should not ask doctors to stop being our healers and become our killers.

* 1 Cor. 6:19-20 - “Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, which you have from God? You are not your own; you were purchased, and at what price! So glorify God in your body.”

The Death Penalty

The purpose of punishing criminals is to redress the disorder caused by the offense, to preserve public order and personal safety, and to correct the offender. The Church recognizes society’s right to use capital punishment in grave cases, but in 1995, Pope John Paul II wrote in *Evangelium Vitae*:

“in cases of absolute necessity: in other words, when it would not be possible otherwise to defend society. Today, however, as a result of steady improvements in the organization of the penal system, such cases are very rare, if not practically non-existent.”

* Ex. 21:23-25 – “If any harm follows, then you shall give life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burn for burn, wound for wound, stripe for stripe.”

* Mt. 5:37-38 – “You have heard that it was said, ‘An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth’ but I say to you, do not resist an evildoer. If anyone strikes you on the right cheek, turn the other also...”