



So we continue our catechesis on the Ten Commandments that the Lord may help us to know our sins, be sorry for them, and be freed from them by the Lord.

The second commandment is “You shall not take the name of the Lord, your God, in vain.”

To understand this commandment, we have to understand the Jewish belief about names. For a Jew to tell another person your name was like entrusting yourself to that person. A person and their name went hand in hand. So when God reveals His name to Moses, YAHWEH, God is entrusting Himself to Moses. There is trust and intimacy involved in God giving us His name.

So if we abuse God’s name or if we use His name carelessly, we are not just misusing or abusing a word, we are abusing God Himself because God and His name are tied together. God’s name is holy because He is holy. God’s name should be used only to praise, bless and glorify Him. Any other use is sinful.

On the reflection sheet I’ve provided for you today, I spell out in greater detail the specific sins against this commandment and their seriousness.

This commandment not only teaches us about the proper use of God’s name, but how we use the power of speech in general. Other specific violations of this commandment would include: irreverent speech concerning the sexual act, swearing falsely, and some other vulgar language.

On to the third commandment: “You shall keep holy the Sabbath Day.”

God has written in our hearts the need to give Him outward, visible, public, and regular worship. As I mentioned last week, He did this, not because God is some kind of egomaniac who needs our praise, but because we need to praise and thank Him. He is worthy of all praise and thanksgiving by His creatures. That is just the truth of things.

So He writes this in our heart to give Him outward, visible, public and regular worship. For the Jew, of course, the Sabbath Day was Saturday, the 7th day, the day set aside to worship God and to thank Him for creation. It was on the 7th day that God rested after creation. So the Sabbath observance also involved putting work aside for the day.

With Jesus' resurrection, God changes the Sabbath Day from Saturday to Sunday because not only are we to give thanks for creation but also for salvation. By His passion, death, and resurrection, Jesus has saved us from sin and eternal death.

We observe this commandment by participating in Sunday Mass because it is here that Jesus' passion, death, and resurrection becomes present to us. We celebrate together the Eucharist. Eucharist comes from a Greek word which means, "to give thanks".

I want to put this in the strongest possible terms for you. If Jesus had not come to suffer and die for us, this is what our lives would be like. There would be no forgiveness for our sins. We would carry the guilt of our sin around with us the whole of our lives, heaping guilt upon guilt. We would hate each other and live only for ourselves. We could have no relationship with God. We would be slaves to sin with no power to escape that slavery. When we die we would all go to hell in misery and agony, separated from God forever.

This, my friends, is what Jesus saves us from.

We have been rescued from this kind of life. Is there anything else more deserving to give thanks for than this? That is why we come together, every Sunday, to give thanks to God for creation, for salvation, for sanctification, that we are becoming holy through Christ's sacrifice.

This is why, my friends, if we purposely choose to skip Sunday Mass, we are turning our backs on everything that God has done for us. We are saying something else is more important than giving thanks to God. That is why it is a grave sin to purposely miss Sunday Mass.

With that being said, it is important to understand that God does not hold us to the impossible. When it is impossible for us to attend Sunday Mass, we are excused. There's no sin at all. For sickness, care of newborns, care of the elderly, when we're traveling and it's impossible to get to Mass without great hardship, bad weather, the weakness that comes from old age, we are excused from Sunday Mass.

Also, if we work in a service profession, doctor, nurse, fire fighter, police officer, etc., and the work schedule is such that there is no possibility of attending Mass on a particular weekend, we are excused. Essential charity toward others actually supercedes the obligation to attend Mass.

A few other examples of how this commandment is broken: It is a grave sin to skip Mass on Holy Days of Obligation. These are days which the Church sets aside for us to celebrate the great truths of our faith. Doing unnecessary work also breaks this commandment.

All told, God has given us this day as a gift every week to worship Him, to give Him thanks, to pray, to rest, to enjoy the communion of family life. Sunday is God's gift to us.

We saw in the Gospel today Jesus takes Peter, James, and John out of their normal routine of their daily life and He shows them His glory. When the disciples saw Jesus' glory they didn't want to leave that moment. They wanted to stay there and bask in the beauty of God for that is ultimately what we were created for. God has given us a day every week to stop our normal routine, to bask in His glory and His love, to rest and be at peace. Our busy society wants to take that away from you and your family. Don't let it. Let Sunday always be a day for you to go up the mountain, to sit at the feet of the Lord, and to bask in His glory.

**Fr. Mark Gurtner at St. Anthony de Padua Church, South Bend
2nd Sunday of Lent, 2010**

#2: You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain

God's name reveals Himself. He gives us His name in trust and intimacy. We are to use His name to praise, bless, and glorify Him. Any other use of God's name is sinful.

Some examples of specific sins:

Serious matter for mortal sin:

using God's name in a way that is blasphemous
uttering (inwardly or outwardly) hatred, reproach, defiance, or
speaking ill of God
blasphemy against the Church, the Saints, or sacred things
Perjury and false oaths

Matter for venial sin:

using God's name carelessly
speaking of Holy things carelessly

Although using God's name carelessly is only a venial sin, this should never be an excuse to continue to do it. We should all strive to give respect to God by using His name respectfully always and by rooting out any habits of sin in this area.

#3: Keep Holy the Sabbath

God has written into our hearts to give Him outward, visible, public, and regular worship. Sunday worship at Mass is the fulfillment of the Christian Sabbath.

All Catholics are obligated to participate at Mass every Sunday and Holy Day of Obligation; those who deliberately fail in this obligation, without legitimate reason, commit grave sin.

Please note that the following legitimate reasons which excuse one from Sunday or Holy Day Mass:

those who are too ill to come to Mass
those who are too weak due to old age
those who are unable to come to Mass due to care of a newborn or the elderly
those who are traveling and cannot go to Mass without serious hardship
those who estimate danger in traveling in bad weather
those who work in service professions (doctor, nurse, fire fighter, soldier, etc.) who are truly unable to attend Mass because of their duty

It is matter for venial sin to do unnecessary work on Sunday.

Mortal and Venial sins

Mortal sins are sins that break our relationship with God. If one dies having committed a mortal sin and is unrepentant of that sin, one goes to Hell, forever separated from God.

There are 3 conditions that must be met for one to have committed a mortal sin:

- 1) The sin must be **grave matter**. God through the Church reveals to us which sins are grave matter. If one has questions about whether a sin is grave, one should consult the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* and a good priest-confessor.
- 2) One must have **full knowledge** that what they're doing is a grave sin.
- 3) One must have acted **deliberately (or freely)**.

In other words, mortal sins cannot be committed "accidentally". A person who commits a mortal sin is one who knows that their action is a grave sin and freely chooses to do it anyway.

Venial sins are sins that hurt, but do not break, our relationship with God. Venial sins weaken a person's will to avoid evil and may lead one to commit mortal sin. They are violations of God's love and one should strive to avoid them.

REMEMBER

God is merciful and all sins can be forgiven if we turn to Him in repentance. He loves us and wants us to be free from our sins.

Use the great Sacrament of Reconciliation to allow God to free you from your sins.