

THE COMMANDMENTS OF GOD

Q. 1125. Is it enough to belong to God's Church in order to be saved?

A. It is not enough to belong to the Church in order to be saved, but we must also keep the Commandments of God and of the Church.

Q. 1126. Are not the commandments of the Church also commandments of God?

A. The commandments of the Church are also commandments of God, for they are made by His authority and under the guidance of the Holy Ghost; nevertheless, the Church can change or abolish its own commandments, while it cannot change or abolish the commandments given directly by God Himself.

Q. 1127. Which are the Commandments that contain the whole law of God?

A. The Commandments which contain the whole law of God are these two: 1st. Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, with thy whole soul, with thy whole strength, and with thy whole mind; 2nd. Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.

Q. 1128. Why do these two Commandments of the love of God and of our neighbor contain the whole law of God?

A. These two Commandments of the love of God and of our neighbor contain the whole law of God because all the other Commandments are given either to help us to keep these two, or to direct us how to shun what is opposed to them.

Q. 1129. Explain further how the two commandments of the love of God and of our neighbor contain the teaching of the whole ten commandments.

A. The two commandments of the love of God and of our neighbor contain the teaching of the whole ten commandments because the first three of the ten commandments refer to God and oblige us to worship Him alone, respect His name and serve Him as He wills, and these things we will do if we love Him; secondly, the last seven of the ten commandments refer to our neighbor and forbid us to injure him in body, soul, goods or reputation, and if we love him we will do him no injury in any of these, but, on the contrary, aid him as far as we can.

Q. 1130. Which are the Commandments of God?

A. The Commandments of God are these ten:

1. I am the Lord thy God, who brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. Thou shalt not have strange gods before me. Thou shalt not make to thyself a graven thing, nor the likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or in the earth beneath, nor of those things that are in the waters under the earth. Thou shalt not adore them, nor serve them.

2. Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain.

3. Remember thou keep holy the Sabbath day.

4. Honor thy father and thy mother.

5. Thou shalt not kill.

6. Thou shalt not commit adultery.

7. Thou shalt not steal.

8. Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.

9. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife.

10. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's goods.

Q. 1131. What does the first commandment mean by a "graven thing" or "the likeness of anything" in heaven, in the earth or in the waters?

A. The first commandment means by a "graven thing" or "the likeness of anything" in heaven, in the earth or in the waters, the statue, picture or image of any creature in heaven or of any animal on land or in water intended for an idol and to be worshipped as a god.

Q. 1132. Who gave the Ten Commandments?

A. God Himself gave the Ten Commandments to Moses on Mount Sinai, and Christ our Lord confirmed them.

Q. 1133. How and when were the Commandments given to Moses?

A. The Commandments, written on two tables of stone, were given to Moses in the midst of fire and smoke, thunder and lightning, from which God spoke to him on the mountain, about fifty days after the Israelites were delivered from the bondage of Egypt and while they were on their journey through the desert to the Promised Land.

Q. 1134. What do we mean when we say Christ confirmed the Commandments?

A. When we say Christ confirmed the Commandments we mean that He strongly approved them, and gave us by His

teaching a fuller and clearer knowledge of their meaning and importance.

Q. 1135. Was anyone obliged to keep the Commandments before they were given to Moses?

A. All persons, from the beginning of the world, were obliged to keep the Commandments, for it was always sinful to blaspheme God, murder, steal or violate any of the Commandments, though they were not written till the time of Moses.

Q. 1136. How many kinds of laws had the Jews before the coming of Our Lord?

A. Before the coming of Our Lord the Jews had three kinds of laws:

1. Civil laws, regulating the affairs of their nation;
2. Ceremonial laws, governing their worship in the temple;
3. Moral laws, guiding their religious belief and actions.

Q. 1137. To which of these laws did the Ten Commandments belong?

A. The Ten Commandments belong to the moral law, because they are a compendium or short account of what we must do in order to save our souls; just as the Apostles' Creed is a compendium of what we must believe.

Q. 1138. When did the civil and ceremonial laws of the Jews cease to exist?

A. The civil laws of the Jews ceased to exist when the Jewish people, shortly before the coming of Christ, ceased to be an independent nation. The ceremonial laws ceased to exist when the Jewish religion ceased to be the true religion; that is, when Christ established the Christian religion, of which the Jewish religion was only a figure or promise.

Q. 1139. Why were not also the moral laws of the Jews abolished when the Christian religion was established?

A. The moral laws of the Jews could not be abolished by the establishment of the Christian religion because they regard truth and virtue and have been revealed by God, and whatever God has revealed as true must be always true, and whatever He has condemned as bad in itself must be always bad.

FIRST COMMANDMENT

Q. 1140. What is the first Commandment?

A. The first Commandment is: I am the Lord thy God: thou shalt not have strange gods before me.

Q. 1141. What does the commandment mean by "strange gods"?

A. By strange gods the commandment means idols or false gods, which the Israelites frequently worshipped when, through their sins, they had abandoned the true God.

Q. 1142. How may we, in a sense, worship strange gods?

A. We, in a sense, may worship strange gods by giving up the salvation of our souls for wealth, honors, society, worldly pleasures, etc., so that we would offend God, renounce our faith or give up the practice of our religion for their sake.

Q. 1143. How does the first Commandment help us to keep the great Commandment of the love of God?

A. The first Commandment helps us to keep the great Commandment of the love of God because it commands us to adore God alone.

Q. 1144. How do we adore God?

A. We adore God by faith, hope, and charity, by prayer and sacrifice.

Q. 1145. By what prayers do we adore God?

A. We adore God by all our prayers, but in particular by the public prayers of the Church, and, above all, by the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.

Q. 1146. How may the first Commandment be broken?

A. The first Commandment may be broken by giving to a creature the honor which belongs to God alone; by false worship; and by attributing to a creature a perfection which belongs to God alone.

Q. 1147. What is the honor which belongs to God alone?

A. The honor which belongs to God alone is a divine honor, in which we offer Him sacrifice, incense or prayer, solely for His own sake and for His own glory. To give such honor to any creature, however holy, would be idolatry.

Q. 1148. How do we offer God false worship?

A. We offer God false worship by rejecting the religion He has instituted and following one pleasing to ourselves, with a form of worship He has never authorized, approved or sanctioned.

Q. 1149. Why must we serve God in the form of religion He has instituted and in no other?

A. We must serve God in the form of religion He has instituted and in no other, because heaven is not a right, but a promised reward, a free gift of God, which we must merit in the manner He directs and pleases.

Q. 1150. When do we attribute to a creature a perfection which belongs to God alone?

A. We attribute to a creature a perfection which belongs to God alone when we believe it possesses knowledge or power independently of God, so that it may, without His aid, make known the future or perform miracles.

Q. 1151. Do those who make use of spells and charms, or who believe in dreams, in mediums, spiritists, fortune-tellers, and the like, sin against the first Commandment?

A. Those who make use of spells and charms, or who believe in dreams, in mediums, spiritists, fortune-tellers, and the like, sin against the first Commandment, because they attribute to creatures perfections which belong to God alone.

Q. 1152. What are spells and charms?

A. Spells and charms are certain words, by the saying of which superstitious persons believe they can avert evil, bring good fortune or produce some supernatural or wonderful effect. They may be also objects or articles worn about the body for the same purpose.

Q. 1153. Are not Agnus Deis, medals, scapulars, etc., which we wear about our bodies also charms?

A. Agnus Deis, medals, scapulars, etc., which we wear about our bodies, are not charms, for we do not expect any help from these things themselves, but, through the blessing they have received from the Church, we expect help from God, the Blessed Mother, or the Saint in whose honor we wear them. On the contrary, they who wear charms expect help from the charms themselves, or from some evil spirit.

Q. 1154. What must we carefully guard against in all our devotions and religious practices?

A. In all our devotions and religious practices we must carefully guard against expecting God to perform miracles when natural causes may bring about what we hope for. God will sometimes miraculously help us, but, as a rule, only when all natural means have failed.

Q. 1155. What are dreams and why is it forbidden to believe in them?

A. Dreams are the thoughts we have in sleep, when our will is unable to guide them. It is forbidden to believe in them, because they are often ridiculous, unreasonable, or wicked, and are not governed by either reason or faith.

Q. 1156. Are bad dreams sinful in themselves?

A. Bad dreams are not sinful in themselves, because we cannot prevent them, but we may make them sinful: 1.(1) By taking pleasure in them when we awake, and 2.(2) By bad reading or immodest looks, thoughts, word or actions before going to sleep; for by any of these things we may make ourselves responsible for the bad dreams.

Q. 1157. Did not God frequently in the Old Law make use of dreams as a means of making known His will?

A. God did frequently in the Old Law make use of dreams as a means of making known His Will; but on such occasions He always gave proof that what He made known was not a mere dream, but rather a revelation or inspiration. He no longer makes use of such means, for He now makes known His will through the inspiration of His Church.

Q. 1158. What are mediums and spiritists?

A. Mediums and spiritists are persons who pretend to converse with the dead or with spirits of the other world. They pretend also to give this power to others, that they may know what is going on in heaven, purgatory or hell.

Q. 1159. What other practice is very dangerous to faith and morals?

A. Another practice very dangerous to faith and morals is the use of mesmerism or hypnotism, because it is liable to sinful abuses, for it deprives a person for a time of the control of his reason and will and places his body and mind entirely in the power of another.

Q. 1160. What are fortune tellers?

A. Fortune tellers are imposters who, learning the past, or guessing at it, pretend to know also the future and to be able to reveal it to anyone who pays for the knowledge. They pretend also to know whatever concerns things lost or

stolen, and the secret thoughts, actions or intentions of others.

Q. 1161. How do we, by believing in spells, charms, mediums, spiritists and fortune tellers, attribute to creatures the perfections of God?

A. By believing in spells, charms, mediums, spiritists and fortune tellers we attribute to creatures the perfections of God because we expect these creatures to perform miracles, reveal the hidden judgments of God, and make known His designs for the future with regard to His creatures, things that only God Himself may do.

Q. 1162. Is it sinful to consult mediums, spiritists, fortune tellers and the like when we do not believe in them, but through mere curiosity to hear what they may say?

A. It is sinful to consult mediums, spiritists, fortune tellers and the like even when we do not believe in them, but through mere curiosity, to hear what they may say:

1. Because it is wrong to expose ourselves to the danger of sinning even though we do not sin;
2. Because we may give scandal to others who are not certain that we go through mere curiosity;
3. Because by our pretended belief we encourage these impostors to continue their wicked practices.

Q. 1163. Are sins against faith, hope, and charity also sins against the first Commandment?

A. Sins against faith, hope and charity are also sins against the first Commandment.

Q. 1164. How does a person sin against faith?

A. A person sins against faith:

1. By not trying to know what God has taught;
2. By refusing to believe all that God has taught;
3. By neglecting to profess his belief in what God has taught.

Q. 1165. How do we fail to try to know what God has taught?

A. We fail to try to know what God has taught by neglecting to learn the Christian doctrine.

Q. 1166. What means have we of learning the Christian doctrine?

A. We have many means of learning the Christian doctrine: In youth we have Catechism and special instructions suited to our age; later we have sermons, missions, retreats, religious sodalities and societies through which we may learn. At all times, we have books of instruction, and, above all, the priests of the Church, ever ready to teach us. God will not excuse our ignorance if we neglect to learn our religion when He has given us the means.

Q. 1167. Should we learn the Christian doctrine merely for our own sake?

A. We should learn the Christian doctrine not merely for our own sake, but for the sake also of others who may sincerely wish to learn from us the truths of our holy faith.

Q. 1168. How should such instruction be given to those who ask it of us?

A. Such instruction should be given to those who ask it of us in a kind and Christian spirit, without dispute or bitterness. We should never attempt to explain the truths of our religion unless we are certain of what we say. When we are unable to answer what is asked we should send those who inquire to the priest or to others better instructed than ourselves.

Q. 1169. Who are they who do not believe all that God has taught?

A. They who do not believe all that God has taught are the heretics and infidels.

Q. 1170. Name the different classes of unbelievers and tell what they are.

A. The different classes of unbelievers are:

1. Atheists, who deny there is a God;
2. Deists, who admit there is a God, but deny that He revealed a religion;
3. Agnostics, who will neither admit nor deny the existence of God;
4. Infidels, who have never been baptized, and who, through want of faith, refuse to be baptized;
5. Heretics, who have been baptized Christians, but do not believe all the articles of faith;
6. Schismatics, who have been baptized and believe all the articles of faith, but do not submit to the authority of the Pope;
7. Apostates, who have rejected the true religion, in which they formerly believed, to join a false religion;
8. Rationalists and Materialists, who believe only in material things.

Q. 1171. Will the denial of only one article of faith make a person a heretic?

A. The denial of only one article of faith will make a person a heretic and guilty of mortal sin, because the Holy

Scripture says: "Whosoever shall keep the whole law but offend in one point is become guilty of all."

Q. 1172. What is an article of faith?

A. An article of faith is a revealed truth so important and so certain that no one can deny or doubt it without rejecting the testimony of God. The Church very clearly points out what truths are articles of faith that we may distinguish them from pious beliefs and traditions, so that no one can be guilty of the sin of heresy without knowing it.

Q. 1173. Who are they who neglect to profess their belief in what God has taught?

A. They who neglect to profess their belief in what God has taught are all those who fail to acknowledge the true Church in which they really believe.

Q. 1174. How do persons who are members of the Church neglect to profess their belief?

A. Persons who are members of the Church neglect to profess their belief by living contrary to the teachings of the Church: that is, by neglecting Mass or the Sacraments, doing injury to their neighbor, and disgracing their religion by sinful and scandalous lives.

Q. 1175. What chiefly prevents persons who believe in the Church from becoming members of it?

A. A want of Christian courage chiefly prevents persons who believe in the Church from becoming members of it. They fear too much the opinion or displeasure of others, the loss of position or wealth, and, in general, the trials they may have to suffer for the sake of the true faith.

Q. 1176. What does Our Lord say of those who neglect the true religion for the sake of relatives or friends, or from fear of suffering?

A. Our Lord says of those who neglect the true religion for the sake of relatives or friends, or from fear of suffering: "He that loveth father or mother more than Me, is not worthy of Me; and he that loveth son or daughter more than Me, is not worthy of Me"; also: "And whosoever does not carry his cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple."

Q. 1177. What excuse do some give for neglecting to seek and embrace the true religion?

A. Some give as an excuse for neglecting to seek and embrace the true religion that we should live in the religion in which we were born, and that one religion is as good as another if we believe we are serving God.

Q. 1178. How do we show that such an excuse is false and absurd?

A. We show that such an excuse is false and absurd because: 1.(1) It is false and absurd to say that we should remain in error after we have discovered it; 2.(2) Because if one religion is as good as another, Our Lord would not have abolished the Jewish religion, nor the apostles have preached against heresy.

Q. 1179. Can they who fail to profess their faith in the true Church in which they believe expect to be saved while in that state?

A. They who fail to profess their faith in the true Church in which they believe cannot expect to be saved while in that state, for Christ has said: "Whosoever shall deny me before men, I will also deny him before my Father who is in heaven."

Q. 1180. Are we obliged to make open profession of our faith?

A. We are obliged to make open profession of our faith as often as God's honor, our neighbor's spiritual good or our own requires it. "Whosoever," says Christ, "shall confess me before men, I will also confess him before my Father who is in heaven."

Q. 1181. When does God's honor, our neighbor's spiritual good, or our own good require us to make an open profession of our faith ?

A. God's honor, our neighbor's spiritual good, or our own good requires us to make an open profession of our faith as often as we cannot conceal our religion without violating some law of God or of His Church, or without giving scandal to others or exposing ourselves to the danger of sinning. Pious practices not commanded may often be omitted without any denial of faith.

Q. 1182. Which are the sins against hope?

A. The sins against hope are presumption and despair.

Q. 1183. What is presumption?

A. Presumption is a rash expectation of salvation without making proper use of the necessary means to obtain it.

Q. 1184. How may we be guilty of presumption?

A. We may be guilty of presumption:

1. By putting off confession when in a state of mortal sin;
2. By delaying the amendment of our lives and repentance for past sins;
3. By being indifferent about the number of times we yield to any temptation after we have once yielded and broken our resolution to resist it;
4. By thinking we can avoid sin without avoiding its near occasion;
5. By relying too much on ourselves and neglecting to follow the advice of our confessor in regard to the sins we confess.

Q. 1185. What is despair?

A. Despair is the loss of hope in God's mercy.

Q. 1186. How may we be guilty of despair?

A. We may be guilty of despair by believing that we cannot resist certain temptations, overcome certain sins or amend our lives so as to be pleasing to God.

Q. 1187. Are all sins of presumption and despair equally great?

A. All sins of presumption and despair are not equally great. They may be very slight or very great in proportion to the degree in which we deny the justice or mercy of God.

Q. 1188. How do we sin against the love of God?

A. We sin against the love of God by all sin, but particularly by mortal sin.

Q. 1189. Does the first Commandment forbid the honoring of the saints?

A. The first Commandment does not forbid the honoring of the saints, but rather approves of it; because by honoring the saints, who are the chosen friends of God, we honor God Himself.

Q. 1190. What does "invocation" mean?

A. Invocation means calling upon another for help or protection, particularly when we are in need or danger. It is used specially with regard to calling upon God or the saints, and hence it means prayer.

Q. 1191. How do we show that by honoring the Saints we honor God Himself?

A. We honor the Saints because they honor God. Therefore, it is for His sake that we honor them, and hence by honoring them we honor Him.

Q. 1192. Give another reason why we honor God by honoring the Saints.

A. Another reason why we honor God by honoring the Saints is this: As we honor our country by honoring its heroes, so do we honor our religion by honoring its Saints. By honoring our religion we honor God, who taught it. Therefore, by honoring the Saints we honor God, for love of whom they became religious heroes in their faith.

Q. 1193. Does the first Commandment forbid us to pray to the saints?

A. The first Commandment does not forbid us to pray to the saints.

Q. 1194. Why does the first commandment not forbid us to pray to the Saints?

A. The first commandment does not forbid us to pray to the Saints, because if we are allowed to ask the prayers of our fellow-creatures upon earth we should be allowed also to ask the prayers of our fellow-creatures in heaven. Moreover, the Saints must have an interest in our welfare, because whatever tends to make us good, tends also to the glory of God.

Q. 1195. What do we mean by praying to the saints?

A. By praying to the saints we mean the asking of their help and prayers.

Q. 1196. Do we not slight God Himself by addressing our prayers to saints?

A. We do not slight God Himself by addressing our prayers to saints, but, on the contrary, show a greater respect for His majesty and sanctity, acknowledging, by our prayers to the saints, that we are unworthy to address Him for ourselves, and that we, therefore, ask His holy friends to obtain for us what we ourselves are not worthy to ask.

Q. 1197. How do we know that the saints hear us?

A. We know that the saints hear us, because they are with God, who makes our prayers known to them.

Q. 1198. Why do we believe that the saints will help us?

A. We believe that the saints will help us because both they and we are members of the same Church, and they love us as their brethren.

Q. 1199. How are the saints and we members of the same Church?

A. The saints and we are members of the same Church, because the Church in heaven and the Church on earth are one and the same Church, and all its members are in communion with one another.

Q. 1200. What is the communion of the members of the Church called?

A. The Communion of the members of the Church is called the Communion of Saints.

Q. 1201. What does the communion of saints mean?

A. The communion of saints means the union which exists between the members of the Church on earth with one another, and with the blessed in Heaven, and with the suffering souls in Purgatory.

Q. 1202. What benefits are derived from the communion of saints?

A. The following benefits are derived from the communion of saints: the faithful on earth assist one another by their prayers and good works, and they are aided by the intercession of the saints in Heaven, while both the saints in Heaven and the faithful on earth help the souls in Purgatory.

Q. 1203. How can we best honor the Saints, and where shall we learn their virtues?

A. We can best honor the saints by imitating their virtues, and we shall learn their virtues from the written accounts of their lives. Among the Saints we shall find models for every age, condition or state of life.

Q. 1204. Does the first Commandment forbid us to honor relics?

A. The first Commandment does not forbid us to honor relics, because relics are the bodies of the saints or objects directly connected with them or with our Lord.

Q. 1205. How many kinds or classes of relics are there?

A. There are three kinds or classes of relics:

1. The body or part of the body of a saint;
2. Articles, such as clothing or books, used by the saint;
3. Articles that have touched a relic of the body or other relic.

Q. 1206. What is there special about a relic of the true cross on which Our Lord Died, and also about the instruments of His Passion?

A. The relics of the true Cross and relics of the thorns, nails, etc., used in the Passion are entitled to a very special veneration, and they have certain privileges with regard to their use and the manner of keeping them that other relics have not. A relic of the true Cross is never kept or carried with other relics.

Q. 1207. What veneration does the Church permit us to give to relics?

A. The Church permits us to give relics a veneration similar to that we give images. We do not venerate the relics for their own sake, but for the sake of the persons they represent. The souls of canonized saints are certainly in heaven, and we are certain that their bodies also will be there. Therefore, we may honor their bodies because they are to be glorified in heaven and were sanctified upon earth.

Q. 1208. What care does the Church take in the examination and distribution of relics?

A. The Church takes the greatest care in the examination and distribution of relics.

1. The canonization or beatification of the person whose relic we receive must be certain.
2. The relics are sent in sealed packets, that must be opened only by the bishop of the diocese to which the relics are sent, and each relic or packet must be accompanied by a document or written paper proving its genuineness.
3. The relics cannot be exposed for public veneration until the bishop examines them and pronounces them authentic; that is, that they are what they are claimed to be.

Q. 1209. What should we be certain of before using any relic or giving it to another?

A. Before using any relic or giving it to another we should be certain that all the requirements of the Church concerning it have been fulfilled, and that the relic really is, as far as it is possible for any one to know, what we believe it to be.

Q. 1210. Has God Himself honored relics?

A. God Himself has frequently honored relics by permitting miracles to be wrought through them. There is an example given in the Bible, in the IV Book of Kings, where it is related that a dead man was restored to life when his

body touched the bones, that is, the relics of the holy prophet Eliseus.

Q. 1211. Does the first Commandment forbid the making of images?

A. The first Commandment does forbid the making of images if they are made to be adored as gods, but it does not forbid the making of them to put us in mind of Jesus Christ, His Blessed Mother, and the saints.

Q. 1212 How do we show that it is only the worship and not the making of images that is forbidden by the first commandment?

A. We show that it is only the worship and not the making of images that is forbidden by the first commandment:

1. Because no one thinks it sinful to carve statues or make photographs or paintings of relatives or friends;
2. Because God Himself commanded the making of images for the temple after He had given the first commandment, and God never contradicts Himself.

Q. 1213. Is it right to show respect to the pictures and images of Christ and His saints?

A. It is right to show respect to the pictures and images of Christ and His saints, because they are the representations and memorials of them.

Q. 1214. Have we in this country any civil custom similar to that of honoring the pictures and images of saints?

A. We have, in this country, a civil custom similar to that of honoring pictures and images of saints, for, on Decoration or Memorial Day, patriotic citizens place flowers, flags, or emblems about the statues of our deceased civil heroes, to honor the persons these statues represent; for just as we can dishonor a man by abusing his image, so we can honor him by treating it with respect and reverence.

Q. 1215. Is it allowed to pray to the crucifix or to the images and relics of the saints?

A. It is not allowed to pray to the crucifix or images and relics of the saints, for they have no life, nor power to help us, nor sense to hear us.

Q. 1216. Why do we pray before the crucifix and the images and relics of the saints?

A. We pray before the crucifix and the images and relics of the saints because they enliven our devotion by exciting pious affections and desires, and by reminding us of Christ and of the saints, that we may imitate their virtues.

FROM THE SECOND TO THE FOURTH COMMANDMENT

Q. 1217. What is the second Commandment?

A. The second Commandment is: Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain.

Q. 1218. What do you mean by taking God's name in vain?

A. By taking God's name in vain I mean taking it without reverence, as in cursing or using in a light and careless manner, as in exclamation.

Q. 1219. What are we commanded by the second Commandment?

A. We are commanded by the second Commandment to speak with reverence of God and of the saints, and of all holy things, and to keep our lawful oaths and vows.

Q. 1220. Is it sinful to use the words of Holy Scripture in a bad or worldly sense?

A. It is sinful to use the words of Holy Scripture in a bad or worldly sense, to joke in them or ridicule their sacred meaning, or in general to give them any meaning but the one we believe God has intended them to convey.

Q. 1221. What is an oath?

A. An oath is the calling upon God to witness the truth of what we say.

Q. 1222. How is an oath usually taken?

A. An oath is usually taken by laying the hand on the Bible or by lifting the hand towards heaven as a sign that we call God to witness that what we are saying is under oath and to the best of our knowledge really true.

Q. 1223. What is perjury?

A. Perjury is the sin one commits who knowingly takes a false oath; that is, swears to the truth of what he knows to be false. Perjury is a crime against the law of our country and a mortal sin before God.

Q. 1224. Who have the right to make us take an oath?

A. All persons to whom the law of our country has given such authority have the right to make us take an oath. They are chiefly judges, magistrates and public officials, whose duty it is to enforce the laws. In religious matters bishops and others to whom authority is given have also the right to make us take an oath.

Q. 1225. When may we take an oath?

A. We may take an oath when it is ordered by lawful authority or required for God's honor or for our own or our neighbor's good.

Q. 1226. When may an oath be required for God's honor or for our own or our neighbor's good?

A. An oath may be required for God's honor or for our own or our neighbor's good when we are called upon to defend our religion against false charges; or to protect our own or our neighbor's property or good name; or when we are required to give testimony that will enable the lawful authorities to discover the guilt or innocence of a person accused.

Q. 1227. Is it ever allowed to promise under oath, in secret societies or elsewhere, to obey another in whatever good or evil he commands?

A. It is never allowed to promise under oath, in secret societies or elsewhere, to obey another in whatever good or evil he commands, for by such an oath we would declare ourselves ready and willing to commit sin, if ordered to do so, while God commands us to avoid even the danger of sinning. Hence the Church forbids us to join any society in which such oaths are taken by its members.

Q. 1228. What societies in general are we forbidden to join?

A. In general we are forbidden to join:

1. All societies condemned by the Church;
2. All societies of which the object is unlawful and the means used sinful;
3. Societies in which the rights and freedom of our conscience are violated by rash or dangerous oaths;
4. Societies in which any false religious ceremony or form of worship is used.

Q. 1229. Are trades unions and benefit societies forbidden?

A. Trades unions and benefit societies are not in themselves forbidden because they have lawful ends, which they can secure by lawful means. The Church encourages every society that lawfully aids its members spiritually or temporally, and censures or disowns every society that uses sinful or unlawful means to secure even a good end; for the Church can never permit anyone to do evil that good may come of it.

Q. 1230. Is it lawful to vow or promise strict obedience to a religious superior?

A. It is lawful to vow or promise strict obedience to a religious superior, because such superior can exact obedience only in things that have the sanction of God or of His Church.

Q. 1231. What is necessary to make an oath lawful?

A. To make an oath lawful it is necessary that what we swear to be true, and that there be a sufficient cause for taking an oath.

Q. 1232. What is a vow?

A. A vow is a deliberate promise made to God to do something that is pleasing to Him.

Q. 1233. Which are the vows most frequently made?

A. The vows most frequently made are the three vows of poverty, chastity and obedience, taken by persons living in religious communities or consecrated to God. Persons living in the world are sometimes permitted to make such vows privately, but this should never be done without the advice and consent of their confessor.

Q. 1234. What do the vows of poverty, chastity and obedience require?

A. The vows of poverty, chastity and obedience require that those who make them shall not possess or keep any property or goods for themselves alone; that they shall not marry or be guilty of any immodest acts, and that they shall strictly obey their lawful superiors.

Q. 1235. Has it always been a custom with pious Christians to make vows and promises to God?

A. It has always been a custom with pious Christians to make vows and promises to God; to beg His help for some special end, or to thank Him for some benefit received. They have promised pilgrimages, good works or alms and they have vowed to erect churches, convents, hospitals or schools.

Q. 1236. What is a pilgrimage?

A. A pilgrimage is a journey to a holy place made in a religious manner and for a religious purpose.

Q. 1237. Is it a sin not to fulfill our vows?

A. Not to fulfill our vows is a sin, mortal or venial, according to the nature of the vow and the intention we had in making it.

Q. 1238. Are we bound to keep an unlawful oath or vow?

A. We are not bound, but, on the contrary, positively forbidden to keep an unlawful oath or vow. We are guilty of sin in taking such an oath or making such a vow, and we would be guilty of still greater sin by keeping them.

Q. 1239. What is forbidden by the second Commandment?

A. The second Commandment forbids all false, rash, unjust, and unnecessary oaths, blasphemy, cursing, and profane words.

Q. 1240. When is an oath rash, unjust or unnecessary?

A. An oath is rash when we are not sure of the truth of what we swear; it is unjust when it injures another unlawfully; and it is unnecessary when there is no good reason for taking it.

Q. 1241. What is blasphemy, and what are profane words?

A. Blasphemy is any word or action intended as an insult to God. To say He is cruel or find fault with His works is blasphemy. It is a much greater sin than cursing or taking God's name in vain. Profane words mean here bad, irreverent or irreligious words.

Q. 1242. What is the third Commandment?

A. The third Commandment is: Remember thou keep holy the Sabbath day.

Q. 1243. What are we commanded by the third Commandment?

A. By the third Commandment we are commanded to keep holy the Lord's day and the holydays of obligation, on which we are to give our time to the service and worship of God.

Q. 1244. What are holy days of obligation?

A. Holy days of obligation are special feasts of the Church on which we are bound, under pain of mortal sin, to hear Mass and to keep from servile or bodily labors when it can be done without great loss or inconvenience. Whoever, on account of their circumstances, cannot give up work on holy days of obligation should make every effort to hear Mass and should also explain in confession the necessity of working on holy days.

Q. 1245. How are we to worship God on Sundays and holy days of obligation?

A. We are to worship God on Sundays and holy days of obligation by hearing Mass, by prayer, and by other good works.

Q. 1246. Name some of the good works recommended for Sunday.

A. Some of the good works recommended for Sunday are: The reading of religious books or papers, teaching Catechism, bringing relief to the poor or sick, visiting the Blessed Sacrament, attending Vespers, Rosary or other devotions in the Church; also attending the meetings of religious sodalities or societies. It is not necessary to spend the whole Sunday in such good works, but we should give some time to them, that for the love of God we may do a little more than what is strictly commanded.

Q. 1247. Is it forbidden, then, to seek any pleasure or enjoyment on Sunday?

A. It is not forbidden to seek lawful pleasure or enjoyment on Sunday, especially to those who are occupied during the week, for God did not intend the keeping of the Sunday to be a punishment, but a benefit to us. Therefore, after hearing Mass we may take such recreation as is necessary or useful for us; but we should avoid any vulgar, noisy or disgraceful amusements that turn the day of rest and prayer into a day of scandal and sin.

Q. 1248. Are the Sabbath day and the Sunday the same?

A. The Sabbath day and the Sunday are not the same. The Sabbath is the seventh day of the week, and is the day which was kept holy in the old law; the Sunday is the first day of the week, and is the day which is kept holy in the new law.

Q. 1249. What is meant by the Old and New Law?

A. The Old Law means the law or religion given to the Jews; the New Law means the law or religion given to Christians.

Q. 1250. Why does the Church command us to keep the Sunday holy instead of the Sabbath?

A. The Church commands us to keep the Sunday holy instead of the Sabbath because on Sunday Christ rose from the dead, and on Sunday He sent the Holy Ghost upon the Apostles.

Q. 1251. Do we keep Sunday instead of Saturday holy for any other reason?

A. We keep Sunday instead of Saturday holy also to teach that the Old Law is not now binding upon us, but that we must keep the New Law, which takes its place.

Q. 1252. What is forbidden by the third Commandment?

A. The third Commandment forbids all unnecessary servile work and whatever else may hinder the due observance of the Lord's day.

Q. 1253. What are servile works?

A. Servile works are those which require labor rather of body than of mind.

Q. 1254. From what do servile works derive their name?

A. Servile works derive their name from the fact that such works were formerly done by slaves. Therefore, reading, writing, studying and, in general, all works that slaves did not perform are not considered servile works.

Q. 1255. Are servile works on Sunday ever lawful?

A. Servile works are lawful on Sundays when the honor of God, the good of our neighbor, or necessity requires them.

Q. 1256. Give some examples of when the honor of God, the good of our neighbor or necessity may require servile works on Sunday.

A. The honor of God, the good of our neighbor or necessity may require servile works on Sunday, in such cases as the preparation of a place for Holy Mass, the saving of property in storms or accidents, the cooking of meals and similar works.

THE FOURTH TO THE SEVENTH COMMANDMENT

Q. 1257. What is the fourth Commandment?

A. The fourth Commandment is: Honor thy father and thy mother.

Q. 1258. What does the word "honor" in this commandment include?

A. The word "honor" in this commandment includes the doing of everything necessary for our parents' spiritual and temporal welfare, the showing of proper respect, and the fulfillment of all our duties to them.

Q. 1259. What are we commanded by the fourth Commandment?

A. We are commanded by the fourth Commandment to honor, love and obey our parents in all that is not sin.

Q. 1260. Why should we refuse to obey parents or superiors who command us to sin?

A. We should refuse to obey parents or superiors who command us to sin because they are not then acting with God's authority, but contrary to it and in violation of His laws.

Q. 1261. Are we bound to honor and obey others than our parents?

A. We are also bound to honor and obey our bishops, pastors, magistrates, teachers, and other lawful superiors.

Q. 1262. Who are meant by magistrates?

A. By magistrates are meant all officials of whatever rank who have a lawful right to rule over us and our temporal possessions or affairs.

Q. 1263. Who are meant by lawful superiors?

A. By lawful superiors are meant all persons to whom we are in any way subject, such as employers or others under whose authority we live or work.

Q. 1264. What is the duty of servants or workmen to their employers?

A. The duty of servants or workmen to their employers is to serve them faithfully and honestly, according to their agreement, and to guard against injuring their property or reputation.

Q. 1265. Have parents and superiors any duties toward those who are under their charge?

A. It is the duty of parents and superiors to take good care of all under their charge and give them proper direction and example.

Q. 1266. If parents or superiors neglect their duty or abuse their authority in any particular, should we follow their direction and example in that particular?

A. If parents or superiors neglect their duty or abuse their authority in any particular we should not follow their direction or example in that particular, but follow the dictates of our conscience in the performance of our duty.

Q. 1267. What is the duty of employers to their servants or workmen?

A. The duty of employers to their servants or workmen is to see that they are kindly and fairly treated and provided for, according to their agreement, and that they are justly paid their wages at the proper time.

Q. 1268. What is forbidden by the fourth Commandment?

A. The fourth Commandment forbids all disobedience, contempt, and stubbornness towards our parents or lawful superiors.

Q. 1269. What is meant by contempt and stubbornness?

A. By contempt is meant willful disrespect for lawful authority, and by stubbornness is meant willful determination not to yield to lawful authority.

Q. 1270. What is the fifth Commandment?

A. The fifth Commandment is: Thou shalt not kill.

Q. 1271. What killing does this commandment forbid?

A. This commandment forbids the killing only of human beings.

Q. 1272. How do we know that this commandment forbids the killing only of human beings?

A. We know that this commandment forbids the killing only of human beings because, after giving this commandment, God commanded that animals be killed for sacrifice in the temple of Jerusalem, and God never contradicts Himself.

Q. 1273. What are we commanded by the fifth Commandment?

A. We are commanded by the fifth Commandment to live in peace and union with our neighbor, to respect his rights, to seek his spiritual and bodily welfare, and to take proper care of our own life and health.

Q. 1274. What sin is it to destroy one's own life, or commit suicide, as this act is called?

A. It is a mortal sin to destroy one's own life or commit suicide, as this act is called, and persons who willfully and knowingly commit such an act die in a state of mortal sin and are deprived of Christian burial. It is also wrong to expose one's self unnecessarily to the danger of death by rash or foolhardy feats of daring.

Q. 1275. Is it ever lawful for any cause to deliberately and intentionally take away the life of an innocent person?

A. It is never lawful for any cause to deliberately and intentionally take away the life of an innocent person. Such deeds are always murder, and can never be excused for any reason, however important or necessary.

Q. 1276. Under what circumstances may human life be lawfully taken?

A. Human life may be lawfully taken:

1. In self-defense, when we are unjustly attacked and have no other means of saving our own lives;
2. In a just war, when the safety or rights of the nation require it;
3. By the lawful execution of a criminal, fairly tried and found guilty of a crime punishable by death when the preservation of law and order and the good of the community require such execution.

Q. 1277. What is forbidden by the fifth Commandment?

A. The fifth Commandment forbids all willful murder, fighting, anger, hatred, revenge, and bad example.

Q. 1278. Can the fifth commandment be broken by giving scandal or bad example and by inducing others to sin?

A. The fifth commandment can be broken by giving scandal or bad example and inducing others to sin, because such acts may destroy the life of the soul by leading it into mortal sin.

Q. 1279. What is scandal?

A. Scandal is any sinful word, deed or omission that disposes others to sin, or lessens their respect for God and holy religion.

Q. 1280. Why are fighting, anger, hatred and revenge forbidden by the fifth commandment?

A. Fighting, anger, hatred and revenge are forbidden by the fifth commandment because they are sinful in themselves and may lead to murder. The commandments forbid not only whatever violates them, but also whatever may lead to their violation.

Q. 1281. What is the sixth Commandment?

A. The sixth Commandment is: Thou shalt not commit adultery.

Q. 1282. What are we commanded by the sixth Commandment?

A. We are commanded by the sixth Commandment to be pure in thought and modest in all our looks, words, and actions.

Q. 1283. It is a sin to listen to immodest conversation, songs or jokes?

A. It is a sin to listen to immodest conversation, songs or jokes when we can avoid it, or to show in any way that we take pleasure in such things.

Q. 1284. What is forbidden by the sixth Commandment?

A. The sixth Commandment forbids all unchaste freedom with another's wife or husband; also all immodesty with ourselves or others in looks, dress, words, and actions.

Q. 1285. Why are sins of impurity the most dangerous?

A. Sins of impurity are the most dangerous:

1. Because they have the most numerous temptations;
2. Because, if deliberate, they are always mortal, and
3. Because, more than other sins, they lead to the loss of faith.

Q. 1286. Does the sixth Commandment forbid the reading of bad and immodest books and newspapers?

A. The sixth Commandment does forbid the reading of bad and immodest books and newspapers.

Q. 1287. What should be done with immodest book and newspapers?

A. Immodest books and newspapers should be destroyed as soon as possible, and if we cannot destroy them ourselves we should induce their owners to do so.

Q. 1288. What books does the Church consider bad?

A. The Church considers bad all books containing teaching contrary to faith or morals, or that willfully misrepresent Catholic doctrine and practice.

Q. 1289. What places are dangerous to the virtue of purity?

A. Indecent theaters and similar places of amusement are dangerous to the virtue of purity, because their entertainments are frequently intended to suggest immodest things.

THE SEVENTH TO THE TENTH COMMANDMENT

Q. 1290. What is the seventh Commandment?

A. The seventh Commandment is: Thou shalt not steal.

Q. 1291. What sin is it to steal?

A. To steal is a mortal or venial sin, according to the amount stolen either at once or at different times. Circumstances may make the sin greater or less, and they should be explained in confession.

Q. 1292. Is stealing ever a sacrilege?

A. Stealing is a sacrilege when the thing stolen belongs to the Church and when the stealing takes place in the Church.

Q. 1293. What sins are equivalent to stealing?

A. All sins of cheating, defrauding or wronging others of their property; also all sins of borrowing or buying with the intention of never repaying are equivalent to stealing.

Q. 1294. In what other ways may persons sin against honesty?

A. Persons may sin against honesty also by knowingly receiving, buying or sharing in stolen goods; likewise by giving or taking bribes for dishonest purposes.

Q. 1295. What are we commanded by the seventh Commandment?

A. By the seventh Commandment we are commanded to give to all men what belongs to them and to respect their property.

Q. 1296. How may persons working for others be guilty of dishonesty?

A. Persons working for others may be guilty of dishonesty by idling the time for which they are paid; also by doing bad work or supplying bad material without their employer's knowledge.

Q. 1297. In what other way may a person be guilty of dishonesty?

A. A person may be guilty of dishonesty in getting money or goods by false pretenses and by using either for purposes for which they were not given.

Q. 1298. What is forbidden by the seventh Commandment?

A. The seventh Commandment forbids all unjust taking or keeping what belongs to another.

Q. 1299. What must we do with things found?

A. We must return things found to their lawful owners as soon as possible, and we must also use reasonable means to find the owners if they are unknown to us.

Q. 1300. What must we do if we discover we have bought stolen goods?

A. If we discover we have bought stolen goods and know their lawful owners we must return the goods to them as soon as possible without demanding compensation from the owner for what we paid for the goods.

Q. 1301. Are we bound to restore ill-gotten goods?

A. We are bound to restore ill-gotten goods, or the value of them, as far as we are able; otherwise we cannot be forgiven.

Q. 1302. What must we do if we cannot restore all we owe, or if the person to whom we should restore be dead?

A. If we cannot restore all we owe, we must restore as much as we can, and if the person to whom we should restore be dead we must restore to his children or heirs, and if these cannot be found we may give alms to the poor.

Q. 1303. What must one do who cannot pay his debts and yet wishes to receive the Sacraments?

A. One who cannot pay his debts and yet wishes to receive the Sacraments must sincerely promise and intend to pay them as soon as possible, and must without delay make every effort to do so.

Q. 1304. Are we obliged to repair the damage we have unjustly caused?

A. We are bound to repair the damage we have unjustly caused.

Q. 1305. What is the eighth Commandment?

A. The eighth Commandment is: Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.

Q. 1306. What are we commanded by the eighth Commandment?

A. We are commanded by the eighth Commandment to speak the truth in all things, and to be careful of the honor and reputation of every one.

Q. 1307. What is a lie?

A. A lie is a sin committed by knowingly saying what is untrue with the intention of deceiving. To swear to a lie makes the sin greater, and such swearing is called perjury. Pretense, hypocrisy, false praise, boasting, etc., are similar to lies.

Q. 1308. How can we know the degree of sinfulness in a lie?

A. We can know the degree of sinfulness in a lie by the amount of harm it does and from the intention we had in telling it.

Q. 1309. Will a good reason for telling a lie excuse it?

A. No reason, however good, will excuse the telling of a lie, because a lie is always bad in itself. It is never allowed, even for a good intention to do a thing that is bad in itself.

Q. 1310. What is forbidden by the eighth Commandment?

A. The eighth Commandment forbids all rash judgments, backbiting, slanders, and lies.

Q. 1311. What are rash judgment, backbiting, slander and detraction?

A. Rash judgment is believing a person guilty of sin without a sufficient cause. Backbiting is saying evil things of another in his absence. Slander is telling lies about another with the intention of injuring him. Detraction is revealing the sins of another without necessity.

Q. 1312. Is it ever allowed to tell the faults of another?

A. It is allowed to tell the faults of another when it is necessary to make them known to his parents or superiors, that the faults may be corrected and the wrong doer prevented from greater sin.

Q. 1313. What is tale-bearing, and why is it wrong?

A. Tale-bearing is the act of telling persons what others have said about them, especially if the things said be evil. It is wrong, because it gives rise to anger, hatred and ill-will, and is often the cause of greater sins.

Q. 1314. What must they do who have lied about their neighbor and seriously injured his character?

A. They who have lied about their neighbor and seriously injured his character must repair the injury done as far as they are able, otherwise they will not be forgiven.

Q. 1315. What is the ninth Commandment?

A. The ninth Commandment is: Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife.

Q. 1316. What are we commanded by the ninth Commandment?

A. We are commanded by the ninth Commandment to keep ourselves pure in thought and desire.

Q. 1317. What is forbidden by the ninth Commandment?

A. The ninth Commandment forbids unchaste thoughts, desires of another's wife or husband, and all other unlawful impure thoughts and desires.

Q. 1318. Are impure thoughts and desires always sins?

A. Impure thoughts and desires are always sins, unless they displease us and we try to banish them.

Q. 1319. What is the tenth Commandment?

A. The tenth Commandment is: Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's goods.

Q. 1320. What does covet mean?

A. Covet means to wish to get wrongfully what another possesses or to begrudge his own to him.

Q. 1321. What are we commanded by the tenth Commandment?

A. By the tenth Commandment we are commanded to be content with what we have, and to rejoice in our neighbor's welfare.

Q. 1322. Should we not, then, try to improve our position in the world?

A. We should try to improve our position in the world, provided we can do so honestly and without exposing ourselves to greater temptation or sin.

Q. 1323. What is forbidden by the tenth Commandment?

A. The tenth Commandment forbids all desires to take or keep wrongfully what belongs to another.

Q. 1324. In what does the sixth commandment differ from the ninth, and the seventh differ from the tenth?

A. The sixth commandment differs from the ninth in this, that the sixth refers chiefly to external acts of impurity, while the ninth refers more to sins of thought against purity. The seventh commandment refers chiefly to external acts of dishonesty, while the tenth refers more to thoughts against honesty.