

CHAPTER 2

The First Three Commandments of God—Love of God

One day our Lord was talking to a group of people. A doctor of the law, trying to confuse Him, asked Him which was the greatest commandment of all. Can you imagine how the people listened to hear what Jesus would say to this? Jesus answered by quoting some words from the Old Testament: “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with thy whole mind, and with thy whole strength. This is the greatest and the first commandment. And the second is like it: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself” (Mt. 22:38–39; cf. Deut. 6:5).

LESSON 15

What Is God’s Law of Love?

God gave us a conscience to help us to be happy on earth and to get to heaven. Our conscience, when rightly formed, tells us what is right and what is wrong.

But we do not always follow our conscience. As our own experience shows, we can sin and become wicked. To strengthen the voice of conscience, God has given men a set of laws or rules of conduct. He gave them to Moses on Mt. Sinai, amid thunder, lightning, fire, and smoke. Do you remember the story of how the Israelites received the Ten Commandments? Although some of the



people still refused to do as God commanded, others obeyed Him.

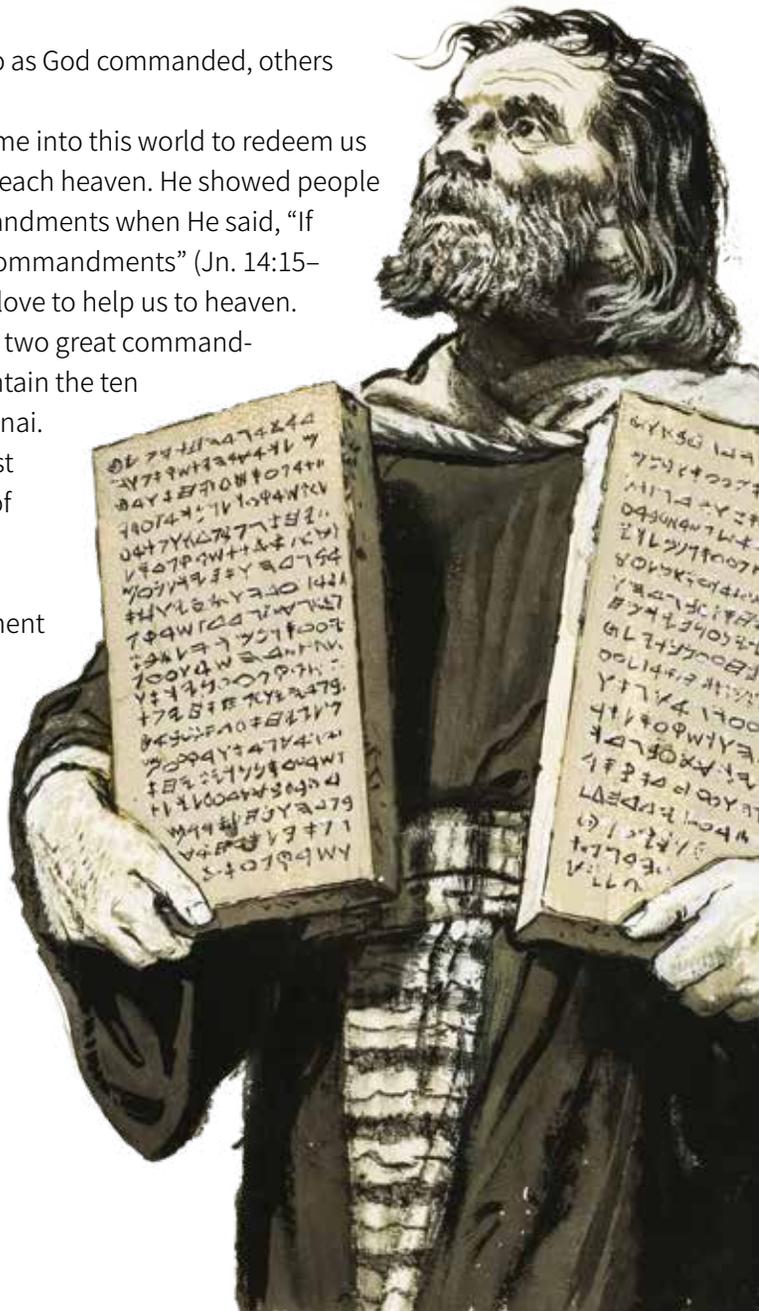
Years later Jesus came into this world to redeem us and to show us how to reach heaven. He showed people how to keep the commandments when He said, “If you love me, keep my commandments” (Jn. 14:15–16). He gave us a law of love to help us to heaven.

These, then, are the two great commandments because they contain the ten given to Moses on Mt. Sinai.

The first includes the first three commandments of God. Which are the first three commandments?

The second commandment of love includes the remaining seven commandments. Which are the last seven commandments?

Through loving God and loving our neighbor, we will be able to receive the gift of salvation and glorify God in this life and in heaven.



**FOR ME TO REVIEW***Catechism Lesson*

310. Q. 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.

311. Q. Which are the commandments that contain the whole law of God?

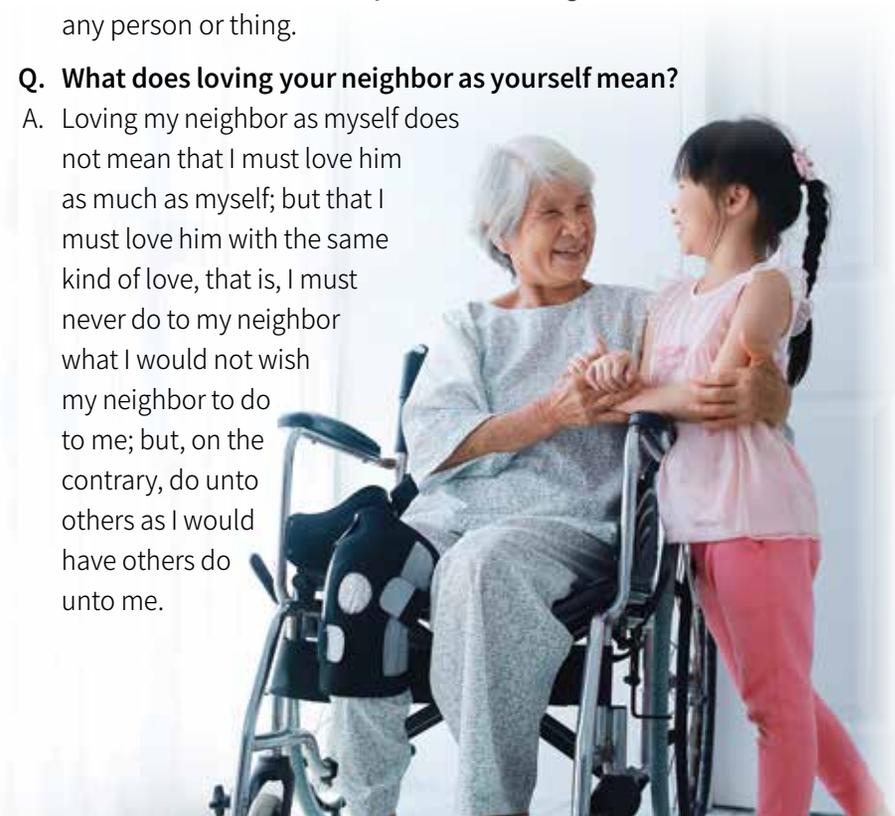
A. The commandments which contain the whole law of God are these two: 1) Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, with thy whole soul, with thy whole strength, and with thy whole mind; 2) Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.

101. Q. How do we show that we love God above all things?

A. We show that we love God above all things by keeping His commandments and by never offending Him for any person or thing.

102. Q. What does loving your neighbor as yourself mean?

A. Loving my neighbor as myself does not mean that I must love him as much as myself; but that I must love him with the same kind of love, that is, I must never do to my neighbor what I would not wish my neighbor to do to me; but, on the contrary, do unto others as I would have others do unto me.



313. Q. Which are the Commandments of God?

- A. The Commandments of God are these ten:
1. I am the Lord thy God. Thou shalt not have strange gods before Me.
 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.

**FOR ME TO REMEMBER**

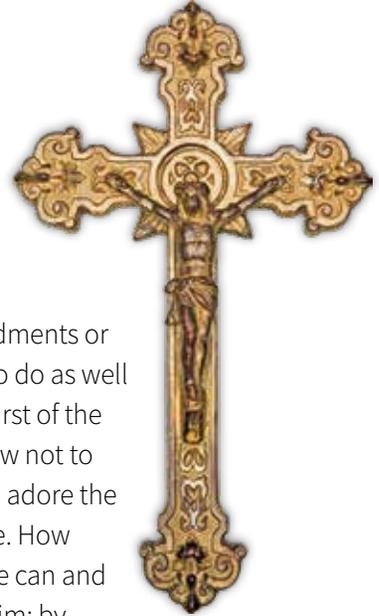
1. I must love God above all things.
2. I must love my neighbor as myself.
3. I must serve God and see Him in all people.

**FOR ME TO DO**

1. Use the Ten Commandments as a guide when I examine my conscience for confession.
2. Show my love of neighbor at least once every day.
3. Do a good deed at least once a day.

LESSON 16

How Much Do You Remember About the First Commandment?



Let us recall that in studying the Ten Commandments or Laws of God, we learned what God wishes us to do as well as what He forbids us to do. Do you know the first of the Ten Commandments? We are warned in this law not to have strange gods. By it we are commanded to adore the one true God to whom supreme worship is due. How can we, as creatures, give God this worship? We can and do worship Him: by faith, that is, believing in Him; by hope, which means trusting Him; and by love, that is, loving God and our neighbor. We worship God also when we adore Him and pray to Him, especially when we participate in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.

We sin against this wonderful gift of faith when we do not believe all the truths that God has revealed to us.

We can sin against hope in two ways. One way is by presumption. This means we are overconfident of our ability and are satisfied with ourselves and our own good work to such an extent that we think we can get to heaven without God. We say, "I can do it all on my own!"

Or we may sin by despair. This means we lose hope or trust in God's mercy and goodness. We say, as it were, "My sins are too great. God will never forgive me. Why ask Him?"

To sin against charity would be to have a hatred of God or our neighbor. What might surprise us is the fact that sloth, which makes us neglect our duty to God, is a sin against charity. Other

sins against this virtue are hatred, envy, sadness at another's good fortune, and scandal, that is, bad example.

If we frequently worship God by fervent acts of faith, hope, and charity, God in turn will make these acts easier for us and we ourselves will be more prepared to make them. Thus, these virtues can help us become saints.

The first commandment commands us to adore God alone, but it does not forbid us to honor saints. The saints are God's friends. He is pleased when we honor them and pray to them. They offer their prayers to God for our needs. In honoring them we honor Him for His great goodness to His creatures.

People who do not understand sometimes ask us if we pray to the crucifix or statues that we place in our churches and homes. We know, of course, that we do not pray to statues or other images. We pray to persons, not things. We use crucifixes, statues, and holy pictures to remind us of Christ and the saints, just as we keep pictures of our relatives to remind us of them. These holy objects help us to pray better. They aid us to turn our minds to God. They encourage us to imitate the holiness of the life of Christ and the saints.



Veneration vs. Worship

To explain our relationship with the saints and the Blessed Mother, we should understand the difference between the words “veneration” and “worship.” Worship is what we give to God. But veneration means to show reverence for, to honor and respect, and this is what we give to Mary and the saints. We honor and respect them, but we do not worship them, and they do not want our worship! In addition to venerating them and learning from their heroic sanctity, we ask for their intercession before God. Just as we ask our brothers and sisters here on earth to pray for us and our family, so too can we ask the saints in heaven.

**FOR ME TO REVIEW***Catechism Lesson***1141. Q. What is the first commandment?**

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

1142. Q. 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.

1143. Q. 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.

1144. Q. How do we adore God?

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

320. Q. 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.

321. Q. 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.

327. Q. Which are the sins against hope?

A. The sins against hope are presumption and despair.

- 330. Q. 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.
- 331. Q. 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.
- 333. Q. What do we mean by praying to the saints?**
A. By praying to the saints we mean the asking of their help and prayers.
- 344. Q. 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.

 **FOR ME TO REMEMBER**

1. We adore God alone.
2. We honor and respect the saints.

 **FOR ME TO DO**

1. Pray every day for an increase of faith, hope, and charity.
2. Honor and respect relics and images of the saints.
3. Have statues and pictures of the saints in my home.

LESSON 17

How Well Do You Remember What You Studied About the Second Commandment of God?

The second commandment is: “Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain.” When we consider the greatness of Him whose name we use, we certainly realize the great reverence that it deserves. “In the name of Jesus let every knee bow, of those that are in heaven, on earth, and under the earth: and let every tongue confess that the Lord Jesus Christ is in the glory of God the Father” (Phil. 2:10–11). Think, too, of the miracles that have been performed through the powerful name of Christ. One day when St. Peter was about to enter the Temple in Jerusalem, a beggar asked him for help. Peter said: “Silver and gold I have none; but what I have, that I give thee. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, arise and walk” (Acts 3:6). Immediately he was cured.

God also demands that we speak with reverence of the saints and of holy things. Think back to the first commandment. Why does God wish us to show reverence for the saints and holy things? When we use the name of God or of Jesus Christ without proper respect, we offend God by taking His name in vain. We offend God further by cursing. Cursing, you remember, is asking God to cause an evil to fall upon a person, place, or thing to satisfy our evil desires, and actually to wish evil to happen.

“Blessed be the name of Jesus.”

**FOR ME TO REVIEW***Catechism Lesson***345. Q. What is the second commandment?**

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

346. Q. 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.

1218. Q. 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.

352. Q. What is forbidden by the second commandment?

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

**FOR ME TO REMEMBER**

1. We reverence God’s name by never using it in vain.
2. Good Catholics always show reverence for holy persons, places, and things.

**FOR ME TO DO**

1. Praise God’s name when I hear it used in vain.
2. Say often during the day, “Blessed be the name of Jesus.”
3. Bow my head at the name of Jesus whenever and wherever I hear it.

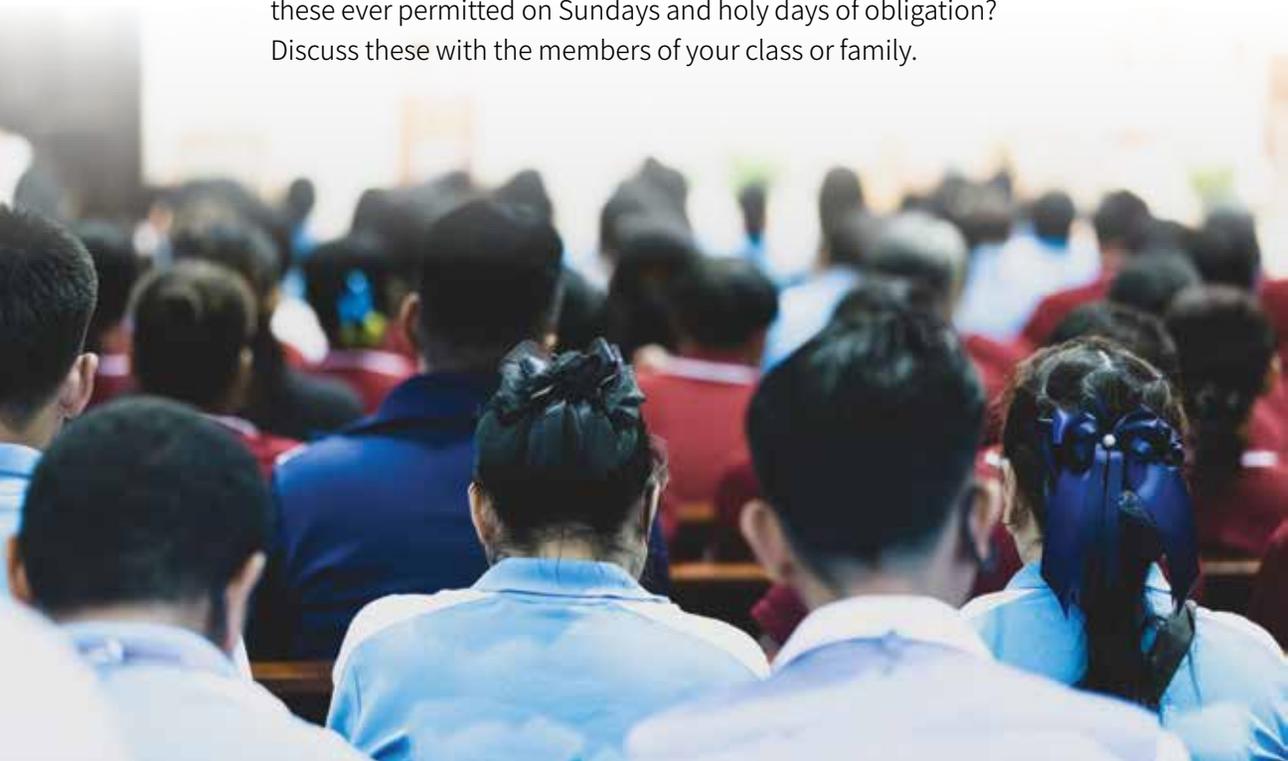
LESSON 18

What Can You Say About the Third Commandment?

You already know that the third commandment is: “Remember thou keep holy the Lord’s day.” Which is the Lord’s day? How do we keep it holy? In answer to these questions we recall that God commands us to worship God on Sunday, the Lord’s day. The Church tells us to keep it holy by assisting at the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. Can you mention other ways by which you can keep the Lord’s day holy?

After God had completed the work of creation, the Bible tells us that He rested. Following His example, we are commanded to avoid all unnecessary work of body or mind and rest on the Lord’s day. This includes such work as painting the garage, washing or ironing clothes, shopping, cutting the grass, or washing the car. We should avoid work which distracts us from true spiritual leisure and rest. Can you think of other kinds of work? Are any of these ever permitted on Sundays and holy days of obligation? Discuss these with the members of your class or family.

Keep Sundays
holy by assisting
at the Holy
Sacrifice of the
Mass



**FOR ME TO REVIEW**

Catechism Lesson

1242. Q. What is the third commandment?

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

1243. Q. 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 holy days of obligation, on which we are to give our time to the service and worship of God.

1245. Q. 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.

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

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

**FOR ME TO REMEMBER**

1. We must be fully present at Mass on Sundays.
2. We must not do any unnecessary work on Sundays.

**FOR ME TO DO**

1. Try to be fully present at Mass on Sundays with greater devotion.
2. Pray for the grace never to miss Mass on Sunday through my own fault.
3. Hear an extra Mass for those who do not go.

The First Three Commandments

Write your answers on a separate sheet of paper



PART I Matching

Match the beginnings and endings of these sentences:

Column I

- A. Cursing
- B. Sunday
- C. First Commandment
- D. Work to avoid on Sundays
- E. Revealed
- F. Sloth
- G. Images
- H. Presumption
- I. Reverence
- J. Third Commandment
- K. Charity
- L. Second Commandment
- M. Hope
- N. Faith
- O. Despair

Column II

- 1. Remember thou keep holy the Lord's Day.
- 2. Calling down evil on a person, place, or thing
- 3. The Lord's day
- 4. Statues or pictures
- 5. Great respect
- 6. Thinking we can get to heaven without earning it
- 7. I am the Lord thy God; thou shalt not have strange gods before Me.
- 8. Belief in God and His truths
- 9. Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain.
- 10. Firm trust
- 11. Made known by God to man
- 12. Laziness
- 13. Labor inhibiting rest and leisure.
- 14. Loss of hope in God's mercy
- 15. Love



PART II Multiple Choice.

Choose the correct answer:

- 1. The second commandment tells us to:
 - A. honor God's name.
 - B. go to Mass on Sunday.
 - C. speak the truth always.

2. We are keeping the third commandment if we:
 - A. be fully present at Mass on Sunday.
 - B. try to obey our parents.
 - C. speak the truth always.
3. When we think that God will take us to heaven even if we do not use the means He has given us to save our souls, we sin against:
 - A. faith.
 - B. hope.
 - C. charity.
4. To curse means to:
 - A. swear.
 - B. wish evil to someone.
 - C. speak an untruth.
5. We practice the virtue of hope when we:
 - A. trust God.
 - B. show respect for priests.
 - C. love our parents.
6. By the first commandment we are taught to:
 - A. go to confession often.
 - B. worship God alone.
 - C. respect the property of others.
8. Work that we should avoid on Sundays requires:
 - A. labor that inhibits rest and leisure.
 - B. labor of body.
 - C. use of machinery.
9. Images of Christ and of the saints are used in our churches because they:
 - A. are blessed.
 - B. help us to pray.
 - C. are decorations.
10. When we speak with reverence of the saints we practice the:
 - A. first commandment.
 - B. second commandment.
 - C. third commandment.