

# Catholicism 101- “How to Be Happy: The Moral Life”- August 2, 2018

## “O Christian, recognize your dignity” -St. Leo the Great

### **Baltimore Catechism Question #6**

#### **Why did God make you?**

God made me to know Him, to love Him, and to serve Him in this world, and to be happy with Him for ever in heaven.

### **Matthew 19: 16-21**

*Now someone approached him and said, “Teacher, what good must I do to gain eternal life?” He answered him, “Why do you ask me about the good? There is only One who is good.\* If you wish to enter into life, keep the commandments.”*

*He asked him, “Which ones?” And Jesus replied, “ ‘You shall not kill; you shall not commit adultery; you shall not steal; you shall not bear false witness; honor your father and your mother’; and ‘you shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ ”*

*The young man said to him, “All of these I have observed. What do I still lack?” Jesus said to him, “If you wish to be perfect,\* go, sell what you have and give to [the] poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me.” When the young man heard this statement, he went away sad, for he had many possessions.*

### **It starts with human dignity**

“The dignity of the human person is rooted in his or her creation in the image and likeness of God. Endowed with a spiritual and immortal soul, intelligence and free will, the human person is ordered to God and called in soul and in body to eternal beatitude.” (Compendium #358)

### **Freedom**

“Freedom is the power given by God to act or not to act, to do this or to do that, and so to perform deliberate actions on one's own responsibility. Freedom characterizes properly human acts. The more one does what is good, the freer one becomes. Freedom attains its proper perfection when it is directed toward God, the highest good and our beatitude. Freedom implies also the possibility of choosing between good and evil. The choice of evil is an abuse of freedom and leads to the slavery of sin.” (Compendium #363)

364. Freedom makes people responsible for their actions to the extent that they are voluntary, even if the imputability and responsibility for an action can be diminished or sometimes cancelled by ignorance, inadvertence, duress, fear, inordinate attachments, or habit.

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366. Our freedom is weakened because of original sin. This weakness is intensified because of successive sins. Christ, however, set us free “so that we should remain free” (*Galatians* 5:1). With his grace, the Holy Spirit leads us to spiritual freedom to make us free co-workers with him in the Church and in the world.

367. The morality of human acts depends on three sources: *the object chosen*, either a true or apparent good; *the intention* of the subject who acts, that is, the purpose for which the subject performs the act; and *the circumstances* of the act, which include its consequences.

368. An act is morally good when it assumes simultaneously the goodness of the object, of the end, and of the circumstances. A chosen object can by itself vitiate an act in its entirety, even if the intention is good. It is not licit to do evil so that good may result from it. An evil end corrupts the action, even if the object is good in itself. On the other hand, a good end does not make an act good if the object of that act is evil, since the end does not justify the means. Circumstances can increase or diminish the responsibility of the one who is acting but they cannot change the moral quality of the acts themselves. They never make good an act which is in itself evil.

369. There are some acts which, in and of themselves, are always illicit by reason of their object (for example, blasphemy, homicide, adultery). Choosing such acts entails a disorder of the will, that is, a moral evil which can never be justified by appealing to the good effects which could possibly result from them.

## **Sin**

Sin is “a word, an act, or a desire contrary to the eternal Law” (Saint Augustine). It is an offense against God in disobedience to his love. It wounds human nature and injures human solidarity. Christ in his passion fully revealed the seriousness of sin and overcame it with his mercy.

## **Mortal sin**

One commits a mortal sin when there are simultaneously present: grave matter, full knowledge, and deliberate consent. This sin destroys charity in us, deprives us of sanctifying grace, and, if unrepented, leads us to the eternal death of hell. It can be forgiven in the ordinary way by means of the sacraments of Baptism and of Penance or Reconciliation.

## **Venial sin**

One commits a venial sin, which is essentially different from a mortal sin, when the matter involved is less serious or, even if it is grave, when full knowledge or complete consent are absent. Venial sin does not break the covenant with God but it weakens

charity and manifests a disordered affection for created goods. It impedes the progress of a soul in the exercise of the virtues and in the practice of moral good. It merits temporal punishment which purifies.

### **The Natural Moral Law**

**1954** Man participates in the wisdom and goodness of the Creator who gives him mastery over his acts and the ability to govern himself with a view to the true and the good. The natural law expresses the original moral sense which enables man to discern by reason the good and the evil, the truth and the lie:

The natural law is written and engraved in the soul of each and every man, because it is human reason ordaining him to do good and forbidding him to sin . . . But this command of human reason would not have the force of law if it were not the voice and interpreter of a higher reason to which our spirit and our freedom must be submitted. -Leo XIII

### **The 10 Commandments**

- 1. I am the LORD your God. You shall worship the Lord your God and Him only shall you serve.**

This means that the faithful must guard and activate the three theological virtues and must avoid sins which are opposed to them. *Faith* believes in God and rejects everything that is opposed to it, such as, deliberate doubt, unbelief, heresy, apostasy, and schism. *Hope* trustingly awaits the blessed vision of God and his help, while avoiding despair and presumption. *Charity* loves God above all things and therefore repudiates indifference, ingratitude, lukewarmness, sloth or spiritual indolence, and that hatred of God which is born of pride. (Compendium #442)

-Calls for faith, hope, charity  
-Adoration, prayer, and sacrifice to God  
-Forbids superstition, idolatry, divination, magic, sacrilege, tempting God, simony (buying and selling of spiritual things), atheism, agnosticism, graven images

- 2. You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain.**

One shows respect for the holy Name of God by blessing it, praising it and glorifying it. It is forbidden, therefore, to call on the Name of God to justify a crime. It is also wrong to use the holy Name of God in any improper way as in *blasphemy* (which by its nature is a grave sin), *curses*, and *unfaithfulness* to promises made in the Name of God. (Compendium #447)

-forbids the abuse of God's name, blasphemy, oaths which misuse God's name, false oaths, perjury

- 3. Remember to keep holy the Sabbath day.**

Christians keep Sunday and other days of obligation holy by participating in the Eucharist of the Lord and by refraining from those activities which impede the worship of God and disturb the joy proper to the day of the Lord or the necessary relaxation of mind and body. Activities are allowed on the Sabbath which are bound up with family needs or with important social service, provided that they do not lead to habits prejudicial to the holiness of Sunday, to family life and to health. (Compendium #453)

-“Sunday is the day on which the paschal mystery is celebrated in light of the apostolic tradition and is to be observed as the foremost holy day of obligation in the universal Church” (Code of Canon Law 1246)

-Calls for worship on Sunday

-Calls for rest on Sunday- “The institution of the Lord’s Day helps everyone enjoy adequate rest and leisure to cultivate familial, cultural social, and religious lives.” (Vatican II).

-CCC **2185** “On Sundays and other holy days of obligation, the faithful are to refrain from engaging in work or activities that hinder the worship owed to God, the joy proper to the Lord’s Day, the performance of the works of mercy, and the appropriate relaxation of mind and body. Family needs or important social service can legitimately excuse from the obligation of Sunday rest. The faithful should see to it that legitimate excuses do not lead to habits prejudicial to religion, family life, and health.”

-CCC **2187** Sanctifying Sundays and holy days requires a common effort. Every Christian should avoid making unnecessary demands on others that would hinder them from observing the Lord’s Day. Traditional activities (sport, restaurants, etc.), and social necessities (public services, etc.), require some people to work on Sundays, but everyone should still take care to set aside sufficient time for leisure. With temperance and charity the faithful will see to it that they avoid the excesses and violence sometimes associated with popular leisure activities. In spite of economic constraints, public authorities should ensure citizens a time intended for rest and divine worship. Employers have a similar obligation toward their employees.

#### 4. **Honor your father and your mother.**

Children owe respect (filial piety), gratitude, docility and obedience to their parents. In paying them respect and in fostering good relationships with their brothers and sisters, children contribute to the growth in harmony and holiness in family life in general. Adult children should give their parents material and moral support whenever they find themselves in situations of distress, sickness, loneliness, or old age. (#459)

Parents, in virtue of their participation in the fatherhood of God, have the first responsibility for the education of their children and they are the first heralds of the faith for them. They have the duty to love and respect their children as *persons* and as *children of God* and to provide, as far as is possible, for their physical and spiritual needs. They should select for them a suitable school and help them with prudent counsel in the choice of their profession and their state of life. In particular they have the mission of educating their children in the Christian faith. (#460)

5. **You shall not kill.**

The fifth commandment forbids as gravely contrary to the moral law:

- *direct and intentional murder* and cooperation in it;
- *direct abortion*, willed as an end or as means, as well as cooperation in it. Attached to this sin is the penalty of excommunication because, from the moment of his or her conception, the human being must be absolutely respected and protected in his integrity;
- *direct euthanasia* which consists in putting an end to the life of the handicapped, the sick, or those near death by an act or by the omission of a required action;
- *suicide* and voluntary cooperation in it, insofar as it is a grave offense against the just love of God, of self, and of neighbor. One's responsibility may be aggravated by the scandal given; one who is psychologically disturbed or is experiencing grave fear may have diminished responsibility.

Also included: scandal, concern for health, avoiding excess of food, alcohol, tobacco, and medicine, use of drugs, organ transplants, kidnapping, hostage taking, respect for the dead, avoiding war, legitimate self defense, and arms sales.

6. **You shall not commit adultery.**

As followers of Christ, the model of all chastity, all the baptised are called to live chastely in keeping with their particular states of life. Some profess virginity or consecrated celibacy which enables them to give themselves to God alone with an undivided heart in a remarkable manner. Others, if they are married live in conjugal chastity, or if unmarried practise chastity in continence. (#491)

Grave sins against chastity differ according to their object: adultery, masturbation, fornication, pornography, prostitution, rape, and homosexual acts. These sins are expressions of the vice of lust. These kinds of acts committed against the physical and moral integrity of minors become even more grave. (#492)

Also included: lust, conjugal fidelity, procreation, natural family planning, sterilization, artificial insemination (IVF), children as gift, adultery, divorce, incest, sexual abuse of children, "free unions", and "trial marriage."

## 7. You shall not steal.

The seventh commandment requires respect for the universal destination and distribution of goods and the private ownership of them, as well as respect for persons, their property, and the integrity of creation. The Church also finds in this Commandment the basis for her social doctrine which involves the correct way of acting in economic, social and political life, the right and the duty of human labor, justice and solidarity among nations, and love for the poor. (#503)

Above all, the seventh commandment forbids theft, which is the taking or using of another's property against the reasonable will of the owner. This can be done also by paying unjust wages; by speculation on the value of goods in order to gain an advantage to the detriment of others; or by the forgery of checks or invoices. Also forbidden is tax evasion or business fraud; willfully damaging private or public property ; usury; corruption; the private abuse of common goods; work deliberately done poorly; and waste. (#508)

Also included: private ownership of goods, economic life, responsibility of the state, responsible business activity, paying a just wage, access to employment, strikes, unemployment, international economics, rich v. Poor nations, direct aid, love for the poor, works of mercy, preferential option for the poor.

“When we serve the poor and sick, we serve Jesus. We must not fail to help our neighbors, because in them we serve Jesus.”- St. Rose of Lima

## 8. You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.

#523

The eighth commandment forbids:

- *false witness, perjury, and lying*, the gravity of which is measured by the truth it deforms, the circumstances, the intentions of the one who lies, and the harm suffered by its victims;
- *rash judgment, slander, defamation and calumny* which diminish or destroy the good reputation and honor to which every person has a right;
- *flattery, adulation, or complaisance*, especially if directed to serious sins or toward the achievement of illicit advantages.

A sin committed against truth demands reparation if it has caused harm to others.

The eighth commandment requires respect for the truth accompanied by the discretion of charity in the field of *communication* and the *imparting of information*, where the

personal and common good, the protection of privacy and the danger of scandal must all be taken into account; in respecting *professional secrets* which must be kept, save in exceptional cases for grave and proportionate reasons; and also in respecting *confidences* given under the seal of secrecy. (#524)

Also included: false witness and perjury, respect for the reputation of others, rash judgement, detraction (disclosing the faults of others without good reason), calumny (by lying harming the reputation of others), flattery, adulation, boasting, lying, professional secrets, the sacramental seal of the confessional, social communications and the media, sacred art.

#### 9. **You shall not covet your neighbor's wife.**

The ninth commandment requires that one overcome carnal concupiscence in thought and in desire. The struggle against such concupiscence entails purifying the heart and practicing the virtue of temperance. (#527)

The ninth commandment forbids cultivating thoughts and desires connected to actions forbidden by the sixth commandment. (#528)

Also included: purity, the gift of chastity, purity of intention, purity of vision, and modesty.

#### 10. **You shall not covet your neighbor's goods.**

This commandment, which completes the preceding commandment, requires an interior attitude of respect for the property of others and forbids *greed*, *unbridled covetousness* for the goods of others, and *envy* which is the sadness one experiences at the sight of another's goods and the immoderate desire to acquire them for oneself. (#531)

Also included: covetous desires, greed, avarice (passion for riches + power), and envy.

### **Precepts of the Church**

Attend Mass on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation

Receive the Eucharist during the Easter Season

Confessing Your Sins Once a Year

Fasting and Abstaining on Appointed Days

Contributing to the Support of the Church

### **Seven Deadly Sins**

Pride

Envy

Lust

Anger

Gluttony

Greed

Sloth