

OCIA Notes: 02 February 2026

GOD'S SALVATION : LAW AND GRACE (15 Minutes)

"All laws find its first and ultimate truth in the eternal law." (CCC 1951)

Expressions of the Moral Law:

- Eternal Law, Natural Law
- Revealed Law (Old Law and the New Law)
- Civil Law
- Ecclesiastical Law (CCC 1952)

I. THE MORAL LAW – The work of divine Wisdom; it is fatherly instruction

A. The Natural Moral Law (NL)

The NL is **immutable and permanent** which is one reason why the commandments are just as binding today as they were 3500 years ago, 2000 years, 100 years ago, and will be forever even if rejected by any human society.

The NL is not perceived by everyone **clearly and immediately** because we are all broken and sinful; man needs grace and revelation so moral and religious truths may be known.

B. The Old Law (OL) (CCC 1961-1964)

The OL is the first stage of revealed Law – summed up in the 10 Commandments

C. The New Law (NL), The Law of the Gospel, the Law of Love (CCC 1965-1986)

The NL is the perfection here on Earth of the Divine Law, natural and revealed

II. GRACE AND JUSTIFICATION (CCC1987-2029)

A. Justification (CCC 1987-1995)

The grace of the Holy Spirit has the power to justify us, that is, to cleanse us from our sins and to communicate to us "the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ" and through Baptism. (Rom 3:22, Rom 6:3-4)

"Justification is the most excellent work of God's love made manifest in Christ Jesus and granted by the Holy Spirit." CCC 1994

- The Holy Spirit makes actual what Christ made possible. (e.g., Baptism, Reconciliation, Eucharist)

B. Grace (CCC1996-2005)

- Our justification comes from the grace of God.
- Grace is *favor*, the free and undeserved help that God gives us to respond to his call to become children of God, adoptive sons, partakers of the divine nature and of eternal life.
- Grace is the life of God!!
 - o It is Baptism, which is our *BORN AGAIN* experience as described in John Ch 3.

C. Merit (CCC 2006-2011)

- With regard to God, there is no strict right to any merit on the part of man.
- With respect to merit, we can't say the merit was "mine"; it was God and our free response cooperating with God!

Section 2 - THE TEN COMMANDMENTS - The Decalogue - "ten words" (5-10 Minutes)
(CCC 2052-2082)

INTRODUCTION:

The Ten Commandments are *immutable*, and they *oblige always and everywhere*.
"This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you." (John 15:12)

- Tablet 1 - The first three commandments concern the love of God, and
- Tablet 2 - The next seven commandment concern the love of neighbor.
 - o St Augustine's quote (CCC 2067)
- The two tablets refer and depend on the other....one cannot honor another person without blessing God his Creator. (CCC 2069)
- Moral Obligation to follow

Why the Law?

The Law is made known to us by divine revelation and by human reason. "...although accessible to reason alone, have been revealed. To attain a complete and certain understanding of the requirements of the natural law, sinful humanity needed this revelation" because "the light of reason was obscured and the will had gone astray." (CCC 2071 - St Bonaventure)

"YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD OUR GOD WITH ALL YOU HEAR, AND WITH ALL YOU SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOU MIND" (Mt 22:37)

What God commands he makes possible by His grace. (CCC 2081)

THE FIRST COMMANDMENT: (15-20 Minutes) (CCC 2083-2141)

“I AM THE LORD YOUR GOD : YOU SHALL NOT HAVE STRANGE GODS BEFORE ME.” EX 20:2-17

- God cares about us enough to give us the Law
- If you love me, you will keep my commandments (Jn 14:15)
- Two great precepts of the Church
 - o To love God (Mark 12:30)
 - o To love our neighbor (Mark 12:31)
- The Ten Commandments are grave obligations.
- What God commands he makes possible by his grace. (CCC 2082)

A. “You Shall Worship the Lord Your God and Him Only Shall You Serve”

- It was God who acts(ed) first, he loved us first, and we then freely respond

The first commandment embraces Faith, Hope, and Charity. It summons man to believe in God (**Faith**), to **Hope** in him, and to **Love** him above all else.

- **Faith** is a gift; it needs to be cultivated and practiced. How do we cultivate and practice it (CCC 2087-2089)
 - o Vital to our faith is our prayer life
 - Mass
 - Daily prayer life – types of prayer – Adoration, Thanksgiving, Petition, Reparation
- If we do not practice our faith, we will/may lose our faith.

And the following are ways we sin against Faith and the 1st Commandment (CCC 2088/2089):

- **Voluntary doubt** - a disregard or refusal to hold as true what God has revealed and the Church proposes for belief;
- **Involuntary doubt** - hesitation in believing, difficulty in overcoming objections;
- **Incredulity** - the neglect of revealed truth or the willful refusal to assent to it.
- **Heresy** – the obstinate post-baptismal denial of some truth which must be believed
- **Apostasy** - the total repudiation of the Christian faith.
- **Schism** - the refusal of submission to the Roman Pontiff or of communion with the members of the Church subject to him.”
- **Hope** – the confident expectation of divine blessing and the beatific vision of God; it is also the fear of offending God’s love and of incurring punishment. (CCC 2090-2092)
- Sins against Hope:
 - **Despair** - man ceases to hope for his personal salvation from God, for help in attaining it or for the forgiveness of his sins. Infamous example (Judas hung himself out of despair)
- **Presumption**:

- #1 Either man presumes upon his own capacities, (hoping to be able to save himself without help from on high), or
 - #2 Man presumes upon God's almighty power or his mercy (hoping to obtain his forgiveness without conversion and glory without merit).
- **Charity** - Faith in God's love encompasses the call and the obligation to respond with sincere love to divine charity. The first commandment enjoins us to love God above everything and all creatures for him and because of Him (CCC 2093-2303).
- Sins against Charity:
- **Indifference** neglects or refuses to reflect on divine charity
 - **Ingratitude** fails or refuses to acknowledge divine charity and to return him love for love.
 - **Lukewarmness** is hesitation or negligence in responding to divine love. (Rev 3:16)
 - **Acedia or spiritual sloth** goes so far as to refuse the joy that comes from God and to be repelled by divine goodness. Acedia is not laziness; it can manifest as busyness. *The Noonday Devil* (Jean-Charles Nault O.S.B.)
 - **Hatred of God** It is contrary to love of God, whose goodness it denies.
 - Comes from pride; You are God and I am not e.g. lose someone you love; it is ok to be extremely sorrowful but not hate God because of our loss

Adoration is the first act of the virtue of religion (CCC 2096-2097):

- Adoration sets us free from turning in on ourselves
- Reminds us that God is God and I am not! Recognizing I am nothing without Him.
 - God is the Creator and I am creature who would not exist except for God.

Promises and Vows (CCC 2101-2103)

- **Promises:** In many circumstances, the Christian is called to make promises to God. Baptism and Confirmation, Matrimony and Holy Orders always entail promises.
- **Vows:** "A vow is a deliberate and free promise made to God concerning a possible and better good which must be fulfilled by reason of the virtue of religion."

"You Shall Have No other Gods before Me"

- **Superstition:** when one attributes an importance in some way magical to certain practices otherwise lawful or necessary. (CCC 2111)
- **Idolatry:** The first commandment condemns polytheism. (CCC 2112)
 - **"Interpretive idolatry"** – an inordinate love of creatures and created things, which prevents perfect love of God
 - Money, Power, Pleasure, Cars, Sports, Work, [Place your idol here]
- **Divination and magic:** (CCC 2115)
 - **Divination:** All forms of divination are to be rejected: recourse to Satan or demons, conjuring up the dead or other practices falsely supposed to "unveil" the future. Consulting horoscopes, astrology, palm reading, interpretation of omens and lots, the phenomena of clairvoyance, and recourse to mediums (CCC 2115)
 - **Magic:** All practices of magic or sorcery, by which one attempts to tame occult powers, so as to place them at one's service and have a supernatural power over others (CCC 2117)

- **Irreligion** – Tempting God, Sacrilege, Simony (Simon Magus (Acts 8:18) (CCC 2118-2122)
 - Simony – Buying or selling spiritual things
- **Atheism** (CCC 2123)
- **Agnosticism** (CCC 2127/2128)

“You Shall Not Make for Yourself a Graven image...” (CCC 2129-2132)

THE SECOND COMMANDMENT (10-15 Minutes) (CCC 2142-2167)

“You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain”

- A. The Name of the Lord Is Holy – “O Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth (Ps 8:1)
- The second commandment forbids the abuse of God’s name, i.e., every improper use of the names of God, Jesus Christ, but also of the Virgin Mary and all the saints. No OMG, JC, GD, etc
 - Reverence of God’s name and all holy persons and holy things
 - Natural sequel to the 1st Commandment
 - *Irony is that we Christians use the Holy name of Jesus and God to express anger, distrust, surprise and other emotions; no other name is use in that way!*
 - **Blasphemy** - Thought , word, or deed that insults God. (Grave Matter)
 - **Cursing** – Praying for evil (Grave matter)
 - **Profane Words** – When we speak in a light of joking way of God or Holy things.
 - We can give scandal by careless use of bad language.

Christianity may be the only Faith that uses the name of the Lord as a curse word. Moments of grace to gently correct someone using the Lord’s name in vain – our kids, siblings, parents, friends, co-workers, golf buddies (after missing the 4 foot putt); try a “Swear Jar” at home and work; “Not about the money, its about the walk to the jar!”

B. Taking the Name of the Lord in Vain (CCC 2150-2155)

- **The second commandment forbids false oaths.**
 - Taking an oath or swearing is to take God as witness to what one affirms. It is to invoke the divine truthfulness as a pledge of one’s own truthfulness. An oath engages the Lord’s name. “You shall fear the Lord your God; you shall serve Him and swear by His name.”

C. The Christian Name (CCC 2156-2159)

- God calls each one by name. Everyone’s name is sacred. The name is the icon of the person. It demands respect as a sign of the dignity of the one who bears it.
- The name one receives is a name for eternity. In the kingdom, the mysterious and unique character of each person marked with God’s name will shine forth in splendor.
 - “Then I looked, and Lo, on Mount Zion stood the Lamb, and with him a hundred and forty-four thousand who had his name and his Father’s name written on their foreheads.” (Rev 14:1)

THE THIRD COMMANDMENT (10-15 Minutes) (CCC 2168-2195)

Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work; but the seventh day is a sabbath to the Lord your God; in it you shall not do any work. (Ex 20:8-10, Deut 5:12-15)

A. The Sabbath Day

- i. The day of the Resurrection: the new creation; Day 8 of the new creation ushered in by Christ's resurrection

God's action is the model for human action. If God "rested and was refreshed" on the seventh day, man too ought to "rest".

It is a day of protest against the servitude of work and the worship of money.

- ii. Sunday – fulfillment of the sabbath

Sunday worship (Mass) fulfills the moral command of the Old Covenant.

- iii. The Sunday Eucharist

The Sunday Eucharist is the heart of the Church's life; it is the foundation and confirmation of all Christian practice. It is being faithful to Christ and his Church

- iv. The Sunday Obligation

The precept of the Church specifies, "On Sundays and other holy days of obligation the faithful are bound to participate in the Mass." (CCC 2180)

- v. A day of grace and rest from work

- a. Just as God "rested on the seventh day from all his work, which he had done" (Gen 2:2) man also, after working throughout the week should rest on Sundays.
- b. On Sundays and other holy days of obligation one should refrain from work and other activities that get in the way of our worship "owed" to God
- c. We also have an obligation to be mindful of others who have the same needs and rights but cannot rest due to poverty or misery.
- d. The faithful are encouraged to perform works of charity (e.g., take care of the homeless, the sick, the aged)

Conclusion (5 Minutes)/Questions/Comments/Shared Experiences (10 Minutes)

God's Salvation: Law and Grace

The 10 Commandments overview

- a. The first Commandment
- b. The Second Commandment
- c. The Third Commandment