



# RCIA at Saint Sylvester



## Christian Moral Life



# Opening Prayer



# Prayer to Know God's Commanding Love

Heavenly Father,

You call us to a new life every day... in the ways we think, the words we speak, and the actions we take. Lord, help us to ponder and understand your deepest desires for us in living your commandments. Give us the grace, through your Holy Spirit, to know your love for us completely and to choose your love in all that we think, all that we say, and all that we do.

Amen

# Tonight

- Background, morality, sin
- God reveals the Ten Commandments
- Jesus gives us the Beatitudes
- Striving for a Christian Moral Life

# Background

- Man given free will – made in image of God (**CCC 1701**)
  - To be human requires daily decisions on all kinds of things
  - Forces many moral choices between good & evil
- Before the Fall
  - God provided everything necessary for Adam & Eve
  - Only one commandment: Obedience to God
  - Knowing God's love as His children, their decisions were simple, but...
- After the Fall
  - The relationships between God and men have been tenuous
  - Many examples of obedience to God (Noah, Abraham, Moses....)
  - Just as many examples of sinful/immoral choices
  - Several cycles of new/broken covenants between God and mankind



# What is Morality?

- The nature of a freely chosen act/decision as good or evil
  - Encompasses our freely chosen thoughts, words, and actions
- God desires us to choose good and avoid evil
  - He enables this through moral law, which is the work of divine Wisdom
  - Biblically speaking, this is Fatherly instruction to his children (CCC 1950)
- There are different, interrelated expressions of moral law
  - Natural law – written in the human heart (our conscience)
  - Positive law – revealed by God explicitly (the Ten Commandments)
- The Virtues are habitual dispositions to do good (CCC 1803-1845)
  - Four cardinal human virtues: Prudence, Justice, Fortitude, & Temperance
  - Three theological virtues: Faith, Hope, and Charity

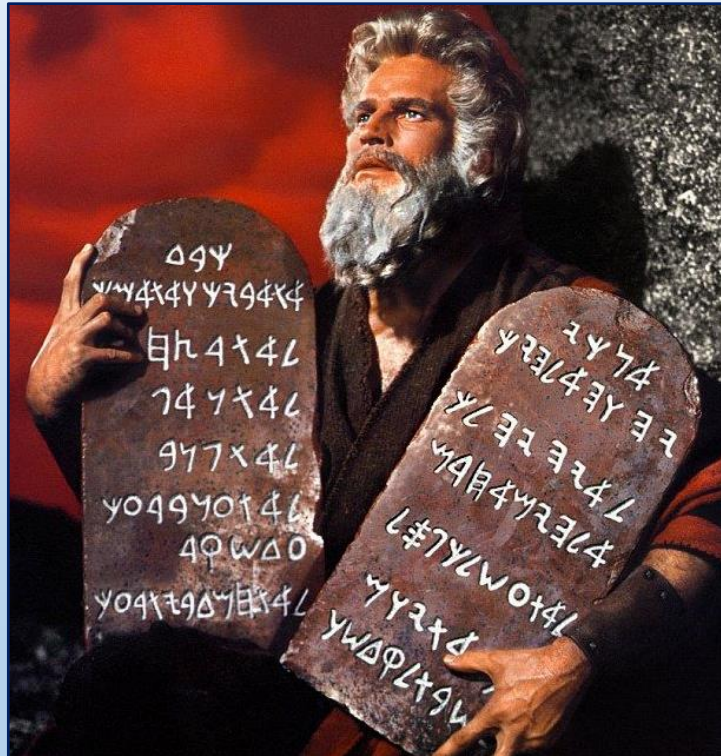


# What is Sin?

- Sin is making a choice contrary to God's moral law
  - An offense against reason, truth, and right conscience
  - Sin is a personal act causing injury to charity (God's love)
- Sins are rightly evaluated according to gravity
  - Mortal sin – destroys charity in the heart by a grave violation of God's law
  - Venial sin – offends charity, but is humanly repairable with God's grace
- Three conditions for mortal sin
  - 1) Grave matter, 2) full knowledge that it is sin, 3) deliberate consent
  - Necessitates a new initiative of God's mercy (confession & reconciliation)
- Sin creates a proclivity to sin
  - Address healing of venial sins; accumulation hardens the heart



# The 10 Commandments



**Exodus 20:1-17**

**Deuteronomy 5:6-21**



## THE TEN

1. I AM THE LORD YOUR GOD. YOU SHALL WORSHIP THE LORD YOUR GOD AND HIM ONLY SHALL YOU SERVE.
2. YOU SHALL NOT TAKE THE NAME OF THE LORD YOUR GOD IN VAIN.
3. REMEMBER TO KEEP HOLY THE SABBATH DAY.
4. HONOR YOUR FATHER AND YOUR MOTHER.
5. YOU SHALL NOT KILL.

## COMMANDMENTS

6. YOU SHALL NOT COMMIT ADULTERY.
7. YOU SHALL NOT STEAL.
8. YOU SHALL NOT BEAR FALSE WITNESS.
9. YOU SHALL NOT COVET YOUR NEIGHBOR'S WIFE.
10. YOU SHALL NOT COVET YOUR NEIGHBOR'S GOODS.

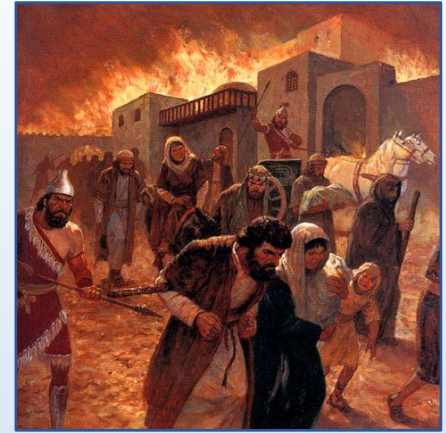


# What are the 10 Commandments?

- God's revelation of Himself and His holy will for us
  - God wants us to know and choose His love **(CCC 2059, 1730)**
- Gave these laws to Moses as a new covenant with Israel
  - They must be understood in the context of the Exodus **(CCC 2057)**
  - Otherwise, they are only understood as a limiting set of rules
- They point out the conditions of a life freed from slavery of sin
  - The 10 commandments are a path of life **(CCC 2057)**
  - "If you love the Lord your God by walking in his ways and keeping his commandments, his statutes, and his ordinances, then you shall live and multiply." **(Dt 30:16)**



# Need for the 10 Commandments



- After 400 years of slavery, Israel had no culture of its own
  - Israel's view of morality skewed by Egyptian cultural values
  - Polytheistic culture shaped by fear of many gods, not love of one true God
- God promised to give Israel the land of the Canaanites
  - More polytheistic cultures, shaped by fear of false gods
  - Immoral pagan beliefs and practices; unhealthy living environment
- New covenant with commandments prepared Israel for new life
  - 10 Commandments protect the sanctity of life and freedom to live
  - God instructed Moses on many additional cultural commandments to provide instruction for good living
- If followed, commandments would enable newfound freedom

# The 10 Commandments

1. No other god before the one God

2. Don't use God's name in vain

3. Keep holy the Sabbath Day

4. Honor your mother and father

5. Do not kill

6. Do not commit adultery

7. Do not steal

8. Do not bear false witness

9. Do not covet your neighbor's spouse

10. Do not covet your neighbor's possessions

**Love for God**

*Prescribes love toward God  
and justice toward neighbor  
...so that man would be neither  
unjust, nor unworthy of God*

**Love for neighbor**

**CCC – Life in Christ**

**Section Two**

**2052-2557**

# Sermon on the Mount

- Taught disciples the “Beatitudes” (Mt 5:1-12)
  - God desires us to be humble, loving and merciful

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are they who mourn, for they will be comforted.

Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the land.

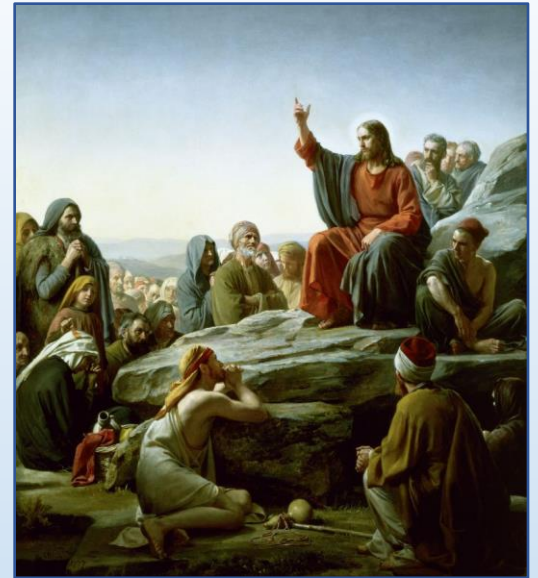
Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be satisfied.

Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.

Blessed are the clean in heart, for they will see God.

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.

Blessed are they who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.



# Beatific Vision



- Jesus raises the standards for living God's laws
  - To show anger at someone is like killing them
  - Lustful thoughts are like committing adultery
  - Divorcing your wife is to enable adultery
  - Swearing oaths by God is not honoring God, it speaks to evil
  - Do not hate your enemies, but love and pray for them
- Jesus fulfills the real purpose of the Ten Commandments (CCC 1716)
  - Reveals Jesus' nature and his example for us (CCC 1717)
  - Turn away from what society values and embrace God's values
- Beatitudes reveal the goal of human existence
  - God's vision for us to be partakers of divine nature and eternal life

Mt 5:13 – Mt 7:29

# Striving for a Christian Moral Life

- Christian moral life is our response to God's love
  - Cooperation with God's plan for salvation
- We strive to be imitators of God as His beloved children
  - Conform our thoughts, words and action to God's commands
- True freedom is power to act or not to act to further goodness
  - Reveals conscience as the law inscribed by God on the human heart
- Education of our conscience is a life-long task guided by:
  - Light of the Word of God
  - Prayer
  - Gifts of the Holy Spirit
  - Witness and advice of others
  - Teachings of the Church



**Galatians 5: 13-14 sums it up well....**

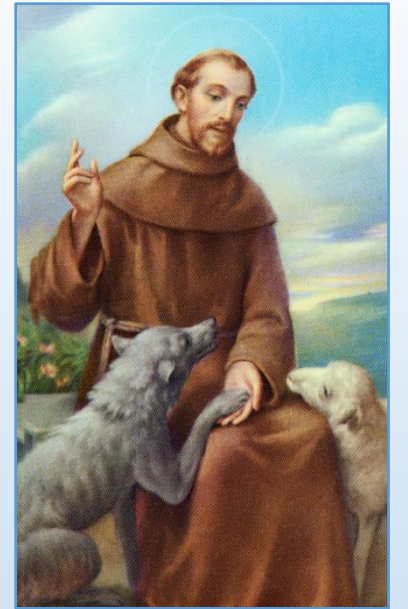
Comments...Questions?

# Closing Prayer





# Prayer of Saint Francis



Lord, make me an instrument of Your peace.

Where there is hatred, let me sow love.

Where there is injury, pardon;

Where there is doubt, faith;

Where there is despair, hope;

Where there is darkness, light;

Where there is sadness, love.

O Divine Master, grant that I may not so much  
seek to be consoled, as to console;  
To be understood, as to understand;  
To be loved, as to love;  
For it is in giving that we receive;  
It is in pardoning that we are pardoned;  
And it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.

Amen