

SEGMENT FOURTEEN

**THEME: Ten Commandments –
Christian Moral Life**

OPENING PRAYER / SCRIPTURE READING: Matthew 19: 16-21

INSTRUCTORS' SUMMARY STATEMENTS:

To be human is to be faced with moral choices: “to do what is good and avoid evil.” The sacraments of initiation, healing and service strengthen us with the wisdom and strength to choose what is good and avoid evil. Our free will and intellect are manifestations of our being made in the image of God.

Living according to the Ten Commandments bears witness to our dignity as human beings made in the image and likeness of God. The Commandments are not impositions on our freedom nor are they a list of do's and don'ts. Rather the Ten Commandments are the divine invitation to grow in authentic freedom and shape our lives in accordance with God's plan for humanity.

“Teacher, what good deed must I do to have eternal life?” is the question posed to the Jesus in Matthew's Gospel. Jesus' answer is our challenge as well: “if you would enter life, keep the commandments.” (Matthew 19: 17) In striving to live the Ten Commandments we respond to our human desire for happiness that God has placed in our hearts as we are confronted with decisive choices. The Ten Commandments teach us to love God above all things and to loving service of neighbor.

The Ten Commandments take on their full meaning within God's covenant of love, mercy and forgiveness. They express the implications of belonging to God and the Christian community of the Church. Living a Christian moral life is our response to God's love and our cooperation with the plan of God in human history.

- ❖ Incorporated into Christ by baptism, a Christian is “dead to sin and alive to God in Jesus Christ.” (Romans 6:11). To follow Christ and be united with him is to strive to be “imitators of God as beloved children, and to walk in love” by conforming our thoughts, words and actions to God’s commands. (CCC1694 – 1696)
- ❖ Endowed with a spiritual soul, with intellect and free will we are ordered to God and destined for eternal beatitude or happiness. Human freedom and the power of reason or the intellect are manifestations of the divine image. (CCC 1701 – 1715)
- ❖ The Beatitudes (Matthew 5: 3-12) are at the heart of Jesus’ preaching. They respond to our natural human desire for happiness. God has placed this desire in each human heart in order to draw us to God who alone can perfectly fulfill it. (CCC 1716 – 1728)
- ❖ Human freedom is the power, rooted in reason and will, to act or not to act based on one’s responsibility. True human freedom is to act at the service of what is good and just. (CCC 1731) Freedom makes us moral subjects such that actions chosen freely through a judgment of conscience can be morally evaluated as good or evil. (CCC 1749)
- ❖ The right to exercise our freedom in moral and religious matters is an inalienable requirement of the dignity of the human person. Authentic freedom is not freedom *from* personal responsibility, but freedom *for* love of God and neighbor (CCC 1738)
- ❖ Conscience is a law inscribed by God on the human heart that calls us to love and to choose good and avoid evil. Conscience is a judgment of reason whereby the human person recognizes the moral quality of a concrete act and assumes responsibility for it. (CCC1776 – 1782)
- ❖ A well formed conscience judges according to reason, the will of God in the Word of God and the moral teachings of the Church. The education of conscience is a life-long task guided by the light of the Word of God, prayer, the gifts of the Holy Spirit, the witness and advice of others and the teachings of the Church (CCC 1783 – 1785)
- ❖ The Ten Commandments state what is required in the love of God and neighbor. The first three commands concern love and fidelity to God, while the other seven speak of love and forgiveness of neighbor as an expression of love of God. (CCC, 2067)
- ❖ What God commands he makes possible through divine grace. When we believe in Jesus Christ, participate in the sacraments and persevere in daily prayer and reflection on God’s word we draw on divine grace and the strength to live according to the commandments. (CCC 2074)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

The following questions may be used by the RCIA team to guide large or small group discussions during weekly RCIA meetings. They may also be given to the participants as a basis for personal reflection during the week.

1. How does living the Ten Commandments become an expression of your love for God and neighbor?
2. How do the Beatitudes (Matthew 5: 3-12) reveal the goal of human existence? In what way do the Beatitudes respond to your desire for happiness that God has placed in your heart?
3. Discuss ways to form your conscience in an ongoing way as you persevere on your journey of faith?
4. Reflect on the obstacles, challenges and difficulties you face in following the commandments. How can you rely more on divine wisdom and strength when faced with moral decision?

SCRIPTURE REFERENCES/QUOTATIONS:

Matthew 5: 3-12, 17

Matthew 22: 37-40

Romans 2: 1:32; 2: 14-16

Romans 12-15

1 Corinthians 12-13,

Colossians 3-4

Ephesians 4-5

Galatians 5: 22-23

“Man is divided in himself. As a result, the whole life of man, both individual and social, shows itself to be a struggle, and a dramatic one, between good and evil, between light and darkness.” Second Vatican Council, *Gaudium et Spes*, 13, 2

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER READING:

Universal Catechism, Part Three, Section One, Life in Christ - 1691 – 2051.
Ten Commandments – 2052 - 2557

Documents of Second Vatican Council, *Gaudium et Spes*, articles 1-15

Pope John Paul II, The Splendor of Truth, *Veritatis Splendor*, 1993

CLOSING PRAYER

Matthew 19: 16-21