

# The Ten Commandments

According to Exodus in the Old Testament, God issued his own set of laws (the Ten Commandments) to Moses on Mount Sinai. The Ten Commandments are considered divine law because they come from God Himself.

## 1. “I am the Lord thy God, thou shalt not have any strange gods before Me.”

This commandment forbids idolatry, the worship of false gods and goddesses, and it excludes polytheism, the belief in many gods, insisting instead on monotheism, the belief in one God. Other things forbidden are spiritualism, tarot cards, séances, witchcraft, dabbling in the occult etc.

## 2. “Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain.”

The faithful are required to honour the name of God. Loving God involves showing respect for His Name. This commandment forbids blasphemy, swearing, cursing, and taking God's name in vain.

## 3. “Remember to keep holy the Sabbath day.”

The Jewish celebration of Sabbath (Shabbat) begins at sundown on Friday evening and lasts until sundown on Saturday. Catholic, Protestant, and Orthodox Christians go to church on Sunday, treating it as the Lord's Day instead of

Saturday to honour the day Christ rose from the dead. Catholics are obliged to attend Mass on Sunday.

## 4. “Honour thy father and mother.”

This commandment obliges the faithful to show respect for their parents — as children and adults. Children must obey their parents, and adults must respect and see to the care of their parents, when they become old and infirm.

## 5. “Thou shalt not kill.”

The better translation from the Hebrew would be “Thou shalt not murder” — a subtle distinction but an important one to the Church. Killing an innocent person is considered murder. Killing an unjust aggressor to preserve your own life is still killing, but it isn't considered murder. Life is sacred from the moment of conception to natural death so abortion and euthanasia and suicide are all sins against the 5<sup>th</sup> commandment. This commandment also forbids causing bodily harm either to your own body or that of another.

## 6. “Thou shalt not commit adultery.”

The sixth and ninth commandments honour human sexuality. This commandment forbids the actual, physical act of having immoral sexual activity, specifically adultery, which is sex with someone else's spouse or a spouse cheating on their partner. This commandment also includes fornication, which is sex

between unmarried people, prostitution, pornography, homosexual sexual activity, masturbation, group sex, rape, incest, paedophilia, bestiality, and necrophilia. It also condemns artificial contraception which includes the use of condoms both within and outside of marriage.

#### **7. “Thou shalt not steal.”**

The seventh and tenth commandments focus on respecting and honouring the possessions of others. This commandment forbids the act of taking someone else’s property. The Catholic Church believes that this commandment also denounces cheating people of their money or property, depriving workers of their just wage, or not giving employers a full day’s work for a full day’s pay. Embezzlement, fraud, tax evasion, and vandalism are all considered extensions of violations of the Seventh Commandment.

#### **8. “Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.”**

The Eighth Commandment condemns lying. Because God is regarded as the author of all truth, the Church believes that humans are obligated to honour the truth. The most obvious way to fulfil this commandment is not to lie — intentionally deceive another by speaking a falsehood. This commandments also forbids perjury, calumny, detraction and injuring another's good name through malicious gossip or tattle.

#### **9. “Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife.”**

The Ninth Commandment forbids the intentional desire and longing for immoral sexuality. To sin in the heart, Jesus says, is to lust after a woman or a man in your heart with the desire and will to have immoral sex with them. You can also lust after your husband or wife. Just as human life is a gift from God and needs to be respected, defended, and protected, so, too, is human sexuality. Catholicism regards human sexuality as a divine gift, so it’s considered sacred only in its proper context — marriage.

#### **10. “Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's goods.”**

The Tenth Commandment forbids the wanting to or taking someone else’s property. Along with the Seventh Commandment, this commandment condemns theft and the feelings of envy, greed, and jealousy in reaction to what other people have.