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The Fourth Commandment

J. DAVIS

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Parental and Lawful Authority!

The Fourth Commandment

With Discussion Club Outline

By

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THE FOURTH COMMANDMENT

HONOR thy father and thy mother, that thou mayest be long-lived upon the land which the Lord thy God will give thee. This is the fourth commandment. It is found in the Book of Exodus, the twentieth chapter, the twelfth verse. Tradition tells us that the Law was written on two tablets as it was given by God to Moses. The first tablet contained the first three commandments. They were summed up by our Saviour when He said: "You shall love the Lord your God with your whole heart, and with your whole soul and with your whole mind. This is the greatest and the first commandment."

The fourth commandment is positive. It orders us to fulfill a duty. The remaining commandments taken literally tell us to refrain from sin. As it is affirmative it serves as a preface to the commands that follow. It rightly takes first place in the second tablet for it deals with the family. And the family is the foundation of all human society. It is first in order and importance. It precedes every other social group, city, State, nation. On it every other group stands or falls.

The first three commandments tell us our duties toward God. Beginning with the fourth commandment, God gives us our duties to ourselves and our neighbor. God comes first. After God comes man. Man as an individual, man as a social being. That is true religion. That is common sense.

St. Paul in the sixth chapter of his letter to the people of Ephesus states the scope of the fourth commandment in this way: "Children obey your parents in the Lord, for this is just. 'Honor thy father and thy mother,' which is the first commandment with a promise—'That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest be long-lived upon earth.' And you fathers, provoke not your children to anger; but bring them up in the discipline and correction of the Lord. Servants be obedient to them that are your lords according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in the simplicity of your hearts as to Christ. Not serving to the eye, as it were pleasing men, but as the servants of Christ doing the will of God from the heart, with a good will serving as to the Lord and not to men.

Knowing that whatsoever good thing any man shall do, the same shall he receive from the Lord, whether he be bond or free. And you masters do the same things to them, forbearing threatenings, knowing that the Lord both of them and you is in heaven, and there is no respect of persons with Him."

We honor a person when we bear that person respect and esteem. The Catechism of the Council of Trent remarks that honor consists "in thinking respectfully of anyone and holding in the highest esteem all that relates to him." It includes love, respect, obedience and reverence. The commandment makes clear a duty that flows from the law of nature. For it stands to reason that those who have given us life, who have co-operated with the Creator in the sublime act of creation, who have fostered us in babyhood and childhood, who have guided our steps until we have been capable of fending for ourselves, are entitled to honor.

Children owe obedience to their parents for their parents represent God. The obedience of the child to the parents is rooted in this fact. Speaking of the blessings of marriage Pope Pius XI in his encyclical on marriage says: "The child holds the first place. And indeed the Creator of the human race Who in His goodness wished to use men as His helpers in the propagation of life, taught this when instituting marriage in Paradise. For He said to our first parents and through them to all future spouses: 'Increase and multiply and fill the earth' (Gen. i. 28). The blessing of offspring however is not completed by the mere begetting of them, but something else must be added, namely their proper education. For the most wise God would have failed to make sufficient provision for children that had been born, and so for the whole human race, if He had not given to those to whom He had entrusted the power and right to beget them, the power also and the right to educate them."

The honor spoken of in this commandment springs from love. Love is due to parents in justice and in gratitude. The duties of parenthood imply untold sacrifices. Only love can repay these sacrifices. This love speaks first in respect and obedience. "My son hear the instruction of thy father and

forsake not the law of thy mother that grace may be added to thy head," are the words of Solomon who has been called the wisest of men. And St. Paul expresses this commandment by saying: "Children obey your parents in the Lord for this is just; obey them in all things for this is well-pleasing to the Lord" (Eph. vi. 1; Col. iii. 20). And our divine Saviour Himself reproached the Pharisees for neglecting this commandment when He said: "Why do you also transgress the commandments of God because of your traditions? For God said: Honor thy father and thy mother, and he that shall curse father or mother let him die the death" (Matt. xv. 3).

The love spoken of in this commandment is a reverent love. It differs from the love of friendship for the love of friendship bespeaks equality. In the reverence that tinges filial love there is the acknowledgment that the parent holds authority and the child owes obedience. It is based on a sensible fear, of offending the parents by violating their commands or even their wishes. "Honor thy father and forget not the groanings of thy mother; remember that thou hadst not been born but through them and make a return to them as they have done for thee" (Ecclus. vii. 29).

When are children freed from the obligation of obedience? Only when they are no longer dependent on their parents, when they are capable of taking care of themselves and leading their own lives. And even then it is their duty ever to show respect and reverence for their parents. "Son support the old age of thy father and grieve him not in his life; and if his understanding fail, have patience with him and despise him not when thou art in thy strength. For the relieving of thy father shall not be forgotten" (Ecclus. iii. 14).

Parental Responsibility

The authority of the parent over the child which is founded in Nature's Law and in the Law of God is not a despotic power. It is a God-given right. Every right brings with it a responsibility. And the child is the supreme responsibility of the parent. That responsibility implies loving care, guidance, training. The first purpose of marriage, the

Church teaches, is the begetting and education of children. St. Thomas Aquinas expresses this truth clearly: "Nature intends not merely the generation of the offspring but also its development and advance to the perfection of man considered as man, that is to the state of virtue." And Pope Pius XI summarizes the parental obligation by quoting the Codex of Canon Law, can. 1113: "Parents are under a serious obligation to see to the religious and moral education of their children, as well as to their physical and civic training, as far as they can, and moreover to provide for their temporal well-being. . . . On this point the common sense of mankind is in such complete accord, that they would be in open contradiction with it who dared maintain that the children belong to the State before they belong to the family, and that the State has an absolute right over their education. Untenable is the reason they adduce, namely that man is born a citizen and hence belongs primarily to the State, not bearing in mind that before being a citizen man must *exist*. And existence does not come from the State but from the parents. Pope Leo XIII wisely declared: 'The children are something of the father and as it were an extension of the person of the father; and to be perfectly accurate, they enter into and become part of civil society, not directly by themselves but through the family in which they are born. . . . And therefore the father's power is of such a nature that it cannot be destroyed or absorbed by the State; for it has the same origin as human life itself' " (*Encyclical on Education*).

And Pope Leo XIII in his encyclical *Sapientiae Christianae* states: "By nature parents have a right to the training of their children but with this added *duty* that the education and instruction of the child be in accord with the end for which by God's blessing it was begotten. Therefore it is the duty of parents to make every effort to prevent any invasion of their rights in this matter, and to make absolutely sure that the education of their children remains under their own control in keeping with their Christian duty, and above all to refuse to send them to those schools in which there is danger of their imbibing the deadly poison of impiety."

The Family

To understand the fourth commandment we must know the meaning of the family. What is the family? The family is a society established by God. In fact it is the first of all societies. It precedes the other two societies so important in human life, the Church and the State. God founded the family to attain a very definite goal. Man and woman unite in matrimony to co-operate with God in the sublime act of creation. This is the primary purpose of marriage. All else is secondary. The love of man and woman in the marriage bond finds expression in new life. Only God can create life. But in creating the highest form of life,—human life,—He calls for the aid of man and woman. This aid is given in what is called procreation. God expressed this in the words “increase and multiply and fill the earth” when He established the first family.

The family consists of father, mother, children. It is called a natural society because it is necessary for the continuance of the race, and nature intends the continuance of the race. As the child cannot rear itself, the family is necessary for the continuance of the race. Centuries ago Aristotle said the family was a society established by nature for the supply of men's everyday wants. By marriage the family is established and maintained. For marriage binds men and women together in an enduring union. It is the marriage contract that makes the family what it is. Moreover this natural society was founded by God Himself and raised to the dignity of a sacrament by our Saviour.

In every society there must be authority and obedience to that authority if the society is to achieve its purpose. The father and mother hold the authority in the family considered as a society. The children owe obedience to father and mother as members of this society. The father is the head of the family and as such holds a responsibility that in justice and love cannot be shirked. The father may not say: “I support my family and my wife runs it.” The fourth commandment is not fulfilled by this. For the development of the child calls for the united efforts of father and mother. More-

over there can be no loving obedience expected from children where parents do not set the example of a united rule. When parental authority is flouted by children, family life becomes a failure. And that is the saddest of all failures.

It may be said that nothing is more important than the realization on the part of parents that they and they alone are responsible for the education of their children. To imagine that Church or State in modern times substitutes ably for this parental responsibility is wrong. The duty of Church and State is to *complement* the home and not to replace it. Pope Pius XI plainly states in his encyclical on Christian Education that there is a "present-day lamentable decline in family education." He rightly remarks:

The offices and professions of a transitory and earthly life which are certainly of far less importance, are prepared for by long and careful study; whereas for the fundamental duty and obligation of educating their children, many parents have little or no preparation, immersed as they are in temporal cares. The declining influence of domestic environment is further weakened by another tendency prevalent almost everywhere today, which under one pretext or another . . . causes children to be sent away from home even in their tenderest years. . . .

The model family is rightly called the Holy Family. Its home was Nazareth. Joseph was its head. Mary his spouse. God Himself, the Divine Child, was subject to them, fulfilling in its perfection the fourth commandment. There was neither wealth nor luxury nor social distinction in that home. It was a humble cottage, a workingman's cottage. Yet it had everything that made for happiness for it had love. Mary loved Joseph and Joseph loved Mary. Both united in loving the Child. And in return they were loved—with what a Love!—by their Child. If ever there is needed proof of the importance of the home and real family life, Nazareth most assuredly furnishes the proof. "He went down to Nazareth and was subject to them," are the words of St. Luke telling the story of a life of at least thirty years. And what was that life? It was the ordinary and the usual elevated to per-

fection. Mary, Joseph and the Child lived the same kind of lives as thousands did in Galilee of their day. Ordinary and simple and humble lives. Yet how different was the living. Parents and Child in pure unselfish love made the years of Nazareth one continued fulfillment of God's command. And so it was the happy home, the home as God wishes it to be.

Authority and Obedience

The fourth commandment is not alone restricted to the duties of children towards their parents and parents toward their children. It is the command of God calling for obedience to all lawful authority. For as St. Paul told the first Christians "all authority is from God, and he who resists authority resists the will of God." Human life is divided into three groups or societies, the family, the State and the Church. According to God's Plan these groups supplement each other. Each one is necessary. No one of the three is sufficient unto itself. Take the State as an example. It does not preserve itself. It did not make itself. It is made by people and it is preserved by the loyalty of its citizens. For what is the State but a group of people? The real unit of the State is the family.

The first thing we find in history is the Garden of Eden and what we find there is the family not the State. The State came later. When the first family migrated from the Garden of Eden it grew into other families. These other families widened out into a group of considerable size with the passing of years. Then the State came as the natural expansion of the family. It is difficult to determine when the first State was founded. But it is not hard to find out why it was founded. It was founded because the family needed it. Individual man needed it. All that individuals or families could do by themselves was to get the ordinary needs of life, "mere life," as Aristotle expresses it. But for the fuller life that man is capable of there was need of a group life, a social life. That is there was need for the State. The State furthers human welfare in regard to things that individuals or families cannot achieve by themselves. So we speak of the *general welfare* as the object that the State has in view.

To attain this object the State must have authority. In fact every social group must have authority within it or else it cannot do its job. And the fourth commandment obliges me to obey the authority of the State. Just as the child is obliged to obey the parent so the citizen is obliged to obey the State. The fourth commandment really means good citizenship. The form of government does not matter provided it is a just form of government. We Americans enjoy the democratic form of government. Our rulers receive their authority in most instances by the ballot of the voter. The voter elects men and women to rule. We hold that the residuary of authority is the people of this nation. So we say that all our rulers govern with the *consent of the governed*. Authority comes from God to the people, and the people place that authority in President, governor, mayor, village head, by the ballot which says: "Rule over us."

This form of government is American democracy. It is not just any kind of democracy. It rests on the Declaration of Independence. That is our charter of liberties. And the Constitution flows from the Declaration. Both form the pillars of American freedom. The Declaration is the Tree of Liberty. The Constitution—its branches. The Declaration is the rock foundation. The Constitution—the towering structure.

Did Bellarmine Whisper to Jefferson?

Nearly two centuries apart they lived—Robert Bellarmine, a Jesuit theologian, and Thomas Jefferson, an American patriot. Yet their pens inked out philosophies so similarly sound and Godlike, that we wonder, we Catholics, whether at least a whisper from the great theologian did not reach the ear of the great statesman as he pondered and wrote his historic document.

The men of the Continental Congress and the Constitutional Convention launched a new experiment in government. They made their scheme of government rest on human rights, natural rights, the rights that are in every man and woman, not because they belong to this race or that nation but because they are *men and women* CREATED by God. These first Americans did not discover any new truths. They pro-

claimed old truths that were self-evident and so stated the fact in their Declaration—WE HOLD THESE TRUTHS TO BE SELF-EVIDENT. The truths they held were as old as man. These first Americans went back to man and they found God.

The truths they proclaimed had been stated by our Divine Saviour and restated continually by His Church. The Declaration is not only a statement of American faith. It proclaims Catholic Faith. For it is a statement of the rights of man flowing from the dignity of the human person because that person has been created by God. Two centuries before Jefferson wrote the Declaration the Jesuit Cardinal Bellarmine stated the truths of the Declaration. This fact is strikingly illustrated by the following parallelism:

Read the extracts below and see what you think.

Declaration of Independence
1776

Cardinal Robert Bellarmine
1576

“All men are created equal; they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights.”

“All men are equal, not in wisdom or in grace, but in the essence and nature of mankind.” “Political right is from God and necessarily inherent in the nature of man.”

“To secure these rights governments are instituted among men.”

“It is impossible for men to live together without someone to care for the common good. Men must be governed by someone lest they be willing to perish.”

“Governments are instituted among men deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed.”

“It depends upon the consent of the multitude to constitute over itself a king, consul or other magistrate. This power is indeed from God but vested in a particular ruler by the council and election of men.”

“Whenever any form of government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the right of the people to alter or abolish it and to institute a new government . . . Prudence indeed will dictate that governments long established should not be changed for light and transient reasons.”

“For legitimate reasons the people can change the government to an aristocracy or a democracy or vice versa.” “The people never transfers its power to a king so completely but that it reserves to itself the right of receiving back this power.”*

* (Catholic Information Society, Narberth, Pa.)

“Government by consent of the governed” has been Catholic teaching down through the ages. The sixteenth century doctrine of the “Divine Right of Kings” was, and is, as repellent to the Catholic as it is to the American; and when one is both Catholic and American, it is just twice as repellent.

This is our form of government. But it is a mistake to think it is the *only form*. For it may be changed if the people see fit to change it. In fact it provides for change by allowing constitutional amendments. Again it may not be an acceptable form to other nations or other peoples. The peoples of India or Japan may not like it. They may prefer another kind of government. That is their affair and not ours. We have no right to proclaim their form inferior to ours or to try to impose our form of rule on all nations. Our sole task is to make our democracy a *real* democracy and allow all other peoples to decide the form of government they wish to have for themselves. This is Americanism. This is Catholicism.

Whatever the form of government, the point to remember is that it has authority and must have authority. That authority has a true claim on the loyal obedience of every citizen. Pope Leo XIII states this very clearly in his encyclical on “The Christian Constitution of States.” He says:

Every civilized community must have a ruling authority, no less than society itself has its source in nature, and has consequently God for its author. Hence it follows that all public power must proceed from God; for God alone is the true and supreme Lord of the world. . . . The right to rule is not necessarily bound up with any *special mode* of government. It may take this or that form, provided only that it be of a nature to secure the general welfare. But whatever be the nature of the government, rulers must ever bear in mind that God is the paramount ruler of the world. . . . Government should moreover be administered for the well-being of the citizens because they who govern others, possess authority solely for the welfare of the State. Furthermore the civil power must not be subservient to the advantage of any one individual or of some few persons, inasmuch as it is established for the common good of

all. . . . Then truly will the majesty of the law meet with the dutiful and willing homage of the people, when they are convinced that their rulers hold authority from God, and feel that it is a matter of justice and duty to obey them and to show them reverence and fealty, united to a love not unlike that which children show their parents. . . . To despise legitimate authority in whomsoever vested is unlawful as a rebellion against the Divine Will; and whosoever resists that, rushes wilfully to destruction. "He that resisteth the power resisteth the ordinance of God, and they that resist purchase to themselves damnation" (Rom. xiii. 2).—(*Immortale Dei*.)

So as Catholics we believe that once our rulers are elected they represent God. The fourth commandment places on us an obligation of obedience to all civil rulers who command lawfully. As individuals they may not appeal to us, they may belong to a political party that we do not like. That has nothing to do with our obedience. The early Christians did not like the persecuting Roman emperors. Nevertheless they cheerfully obeyed all their just commands. Civic obedience is an obligation on every Catholic. There is no such thing as a good Catholic and a bad American. A bad American is a bad Catholic. The better the Catholic the better the American.

Good citizenship means more than obeying the laws of the nation or the commands of those in authority. In a democracy such as ours there is an obligation on every citizen to use the ballot intelligently. We have universal suffrage. So every citizen should vote. Before voting every citizen should understand thoroughly the issues that are under discussion. Each voter should also know the character and ability of the candidate he is going to vote for. What about party loyalty? Does party loyalty mean I should always vote for the party I belong to and for every candidate on the party ticket? Not at all. That is not party loyalty. That is blind fanaticism. A citizen joins a political party because the principles of that party appeal to the citizen. And every citizen should be affiliated with a political party for without party membership there is no opportunity to vote in the pri-

maries. It does not follow from that fact that the citizen is obliged to follow party lines blindly. If the party in question writes a platform that is at variance with the view of the citizen, if it puts into the field candidates lacking in character or ability, that party has no claim on the votes of its members. For that party has betrayed its ideals and so has forfeited its claim to party loyalty. To follow party lines in this event is sometimes called good politics. That is false. It is not only bad politics but it is bad citizenship, bad Americanism, bad Catholicism. In fact as parties stand today it is safe to say that voting independently of party lines is the best Americanism. The split ticket indicates the whole American.

Church Authority

As the family is a society, and the State a society, so is the Church a society. The fourth commandment includes obedience to authority in this society. We call this Church authority. The Church as a society was founded by our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ when He spoke to Simon Peter who had just made an act of faith in His divinity: "Blessed are you Simon, son of Jona because flesh and blood has not revealed this to you but My Father Who is in Heaven. And I say to you Simon, you are Peter (the Rock) and on this rock I will build My Church and the gates of hell will not prevail against it. And I will give to you Peter the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven. Whatsoever you shall bind upon earth shall be bound in Heaven and whatsoever you shall loose upon earth shall be loosed in Heaven" (Matt. xvi. 17, 18). Keys, locking and unlocking, mean authority or they mean nothing. Peter took and used this authority in his lifetime. He shared it with the other Apostles and they shared it with others, and so Church authority began.

The Apostles did not elect Peter as their head and the head of the Church. Christ appointed him. As the Church is the Body of Christ, as Christ lives His Life in the Church always, all authority comes from Him, is exercised by Him. For the Church is from the Apostles, the Apostles from Christ, Christ from God. The Apostles did not act in their

own right but as "sent." That is what apostle means—one sent. They represented Christ. "He that hears you, hears Me." And so the Apostles appointed others to shepherd the flock of Christ. They did this "by the laying on of hands."

The personal element in Church authority does not count. It is not the man that teaches and rules but Christ. In what we call the official system of the Church, the one authoritative teacher, sanctifier, pastor, is Christ. So the authority of the Church secures the liberty of the individual by its impersonal character. It places the individual directly in contact with Christ. The effect of this authority is to unite all the members of one Body. It protects the interplay between the Head and the members. The teaching office of the Church means: "Only one shall be your teacher—Christ." The priest on his lonely mission declaring the Word of God, preaching the Gospel to a dozen members of a Chinese clan, is as authoritative in his teaching as the Pope speaking to thousands in St. Peter's on the same Gospel. For it is Christ's message and he is authorized to give it.

As Christ is back of the teaching Church so is He back of the Sacraments. The Sacraments effect holiness; the Sacraments give Grace not because the one giving them is holy but because Christ is in them flooding the soul of the recipient with Grace. The human instrument has his part to play but it is a minor part. The two important persons are Christ Who is all in all and the individual who wants to receive the Sacraments and who freely puts himself in the right disposition and does nothing to block the march of Grace into his soul.

The Church wields its authority through law. So we speak of Church Law or Canon Law just as we speak of civil law or military law. All authority in every kind of right government expresses itself in law. And so Church authority expresses itself by Church Law. Every Catholic knows the precepts of the Church. These precepts speak the Church's mind which is the Mind of Christ. To say for example: "This is *only* Church Law, this is not a commandment of God," is to miss the true picture of the Church as a divine society, a supernatural society, a unique society among all societies in

the world. Such a statement loses sight of the all-important fact that the Church is Christ and Christ is the Church. The Church did not come to life when Peter and James and John came together and said: "Let us follow the Master." It came into being when Christ founded it and united it with Himself. And so today the Church is not made by several people getting together and joining in a definite form of belief and worship. No, the people do not make the Church. The Church makes them. It fuses them into one community. They become one body, the Body of Christ. "Many members, one body," said St. Paul.

We say that the Pope is the supreme head of the Church. What do we mean by that? We mean that he is the source of all authority because He is the Vicar of Christ. He represents Christ because Christ has given him that commission. His mission is Christ's mission, to teach, legislate and sanctify. The bishops of the Church are united with him. They are to carry out the same mission, but always united with him, as James and John and Andrew were united with Peter. United with the bishops are the priests carrying out the Christ-appointed mission. We call this the hierarchy of authority. Hierarchy means a holy rule, an ordered rule in which authority comes down from a head through different grades.

St. Ignatius Loyola in his classic letter on Obedience remarks that this is the way Providence guides the world "disposing all things sweetly and bringing them to their appointed ends, the lowest by the middlemost and the middlemost by the highest. Whence also flows that subordination in Angels of one hierarchy towards another, and that perfect harmony of the celestial bodies and all things which are in motion, each in its own determined place and position. Their revolutions and movements proceed in orderly fashion from one supreme mover by degree unto the lowest. The same we see upon earth in all well-ordered commonwealths but most of all in the ecclesiastical hierarchy, whose members and functions are all derived from one general Vicar of Christ our Lord."

No law of the Church touches the family more intimately than that which has to do with the education of children.

And it must be remembered that education begins in the home. The mother is the first and greatest educator. No school in the world can make up for the failure of the mother. The best school in the world can only complement the educational work of the mother. The mother has to begin. The school's task is to continue. Moreover the most important years in the education of man are his earliest years. These are in the hands of the mother. When the child reaches a certain age the father enters into the educational apostolate. But the first and all-controlling influence is that of the mother.

The American people have always been school-minded. No nation in the world has more schools. No nation has spent more money on schools. But the American fallacy is to overemphasize the school and to forget the home. As long as our divorce rate continues high, as long as our contraceptive propaganda continues strong, we might as well admit that in our educational efforts we are beaten before we begin. Surely we must look to our schools, correct their defects, improve them in every way. But first things first. And the home is the first thing. A nation of broken homes may sink its millions into schools and the result will be the same as if the millions were poured into the ocean. The same is true if our American homes become the homes of unwanted children. For men and women uniting in matrimony and criminally perverting the love for children into the lust of sex satisfaction defeat the school, and the purpose of the school before the school can begin to function. "Look at our expensive school system," is a common American boast. Until we are able to say: "Look at our marvelous home system with children wanted and cherished," our school boast is futile. Keeping America safe means keeping real American homes. We are looking everywhere for perversive elements. We are hunting for the fifth columnists. They are right at our doors, the doors that open into empty homes. The child is the fullness of the home as the child expresses the fullness of that supreme love that makes of two lives one. For the child is the heart of the home; the home the heart of the nation.

As parents have neither the ability nor the means to con-

tinue the education that they begin, the school is necessary. Both Church and State knowing this, make provision for the school. The duty of the State is to provide the school where all that is necessary for good citizenship is taught. But it is neither the duty nor the right of the State to force the child into a school that the parents do not approve. Pope Leo XIII states very clearly in his encyclical *Sapientiae Christianae*: "By nature parents have a right to the training of their children, but with this added duty that the education and instruction of the child be in accord with the end for which, by God's blessing it was begotten. Therefore it is the duty of the parents to make every effort to prevent any invasion of their rights in this matter, and to make absolutely sure that the education of their children remains under their own control in keeping with their Christian duty, and above all to refuse to send them to those schools in which there is danger of imbibing the deadly poison of impiety" (January 10, 1890).

This parental right and duty regarding the education of children is vindicated by the United States Supreme Court. The State of Oregon had passed a school law making attendance at State schools obligatory on all citizens of that State. This law was declared unconstitutional on June 1, 1925, when the Supreme Court ruled: "The fundamental theory of liberty upon which all governments in this Union repose, excludes any general power of the State to standardize its children by forcing them to accept instruction from public teachers only. The child is not the mere creature of the State; those who nurture him and direct his destiny have the right coupled with the high duty to recognize and prepare him for additional duties."

The fourth commandment places squarely on the shoulders of parents the obligation of securing not merely the education of their children but the *Catholic* education of their children. It may be summed up in the words of our bishops: "Every Catholic child in a Catholic school." To make this clear the Law of the Church states:

The education of all Catholics from their childhood must be such that not only shall they be taught nothing

contrary to the Catholic faith and good morals, but religious and moral training shall occupy the principal place in the curriculum. Not only the parents as mentioned in Canon 1113, but in addition all those who take their place have the right and most serious obligation of providing for the Christian education of the children.

In every elementary school the children must according to their age, be instructed in Christian doctrine. The young people who attend the higher schools are to receive a fuller religious training, and the bishops shall see that this training is given by priests conspicuous for their zeal and learning (Canon 1390).

Catholic children shall not attend non-Catholic or undenominational schools, nor schools that are mixed (that is to say open also to non-Catholics). The bishop of the diocese alone has the right, in harmony with the instructions of the Holy See, to decide under what circumstances and with what safeguards against perversion, the attendance at such schools by Catholic children may be tolerated (Canon 1391).

The Church Law showing the obligation that rests on parents regarding the education of their children is clear. The Popes, the supreme teachers and legislators of the flock of Christ are just as clear. In his encyclical on *Christian Education* Pope Pius XI says:

The mere fact that a school gives some religious instruction (often extremely stunted) does not bring it into accord with the rights of the Church and of the Christian family or make it a fit place for Catholic students. To be this it is necessary that all the teaching and the whole organization of the school, and its teachers, syllabus and textbooks in every branch be regulated by the Christian spirit under the direction and maternal supervision of the Church. So that religion may be in very truth the foundation and crown of the youth's entire training. And this in every grade of school, not only the elementary but the intermediate and the higher institutions of learning as well.

The fourth commandment obliges parents to the full care of children. That full care is expressed by the word *education*.

And that word means development. Fullness of development is found in Catholic education and in no other. The Catholic parent who ignores this truth violates the fourth commandment.

Authority and Obedience in the Social Order

Authority and obedience as prescribed by the fourth commandment arise from man's nature. For it must be remembered that God's commandments are all according to man's nature and for man's happiness. They may all be summed up in the sentence: "Do these things and you shall live and live happily." It is a modern delusion to talk of the commandments as *inhibitions* crushing the desires of men, blasting against the nature of men. The plain fact is that without the observance of the commandments man deteriorates into a brute. And what man does alone, he does in the group whether that group is the family, the nation, or the world. When this happens down goes civilization. It is happening now. It has happened before. It is the one unmistakable lesson of history.

Again it must be remembered that the fourth commandment touches on every social group that man belongs to. We have seen that the three great social groups are the family, the Church, the State. But there are other social groups that man willingly enters as he leads his human life. In modern society the biggest social group is called by the name, capital and labor, employer and employee. To listen to many leaders of both groups today, we would arrive at the conclusion that capital belongs to one family, labor to another, employer belongs to one family, employee to another. The real truth is labor and capital, employer and employee belong to one family. Capital cannot do without labor, nor labor without capital, as has been stated by Pope Leo XIII and Pope Pius XI again and again. The relation between employer and employee is a family relationship. If we grasp that truth we have the key to the solution of the modern social problem. Without that truth firmly believed all the social legislation in the world will not rebuild the social order as Pope Pius XI points out in his encyclical *Quadragesimo Anno*.

The idea of capital and labor being one family had so far disappeared when Pope Leo XIII wrote in 1891 that he was obliged to declare: "All agree that some remedy must be quickly found for the misery and wretchedness which press so heavily at this moment on the large majority of the very poor. . . . Public institutions and laws have repudiated the ancient Religion. Hence by degrees it has come to pass that workmen have been given over, isolated and defenseless to the callousness of employers and the greed of unrestrained competition."

Pope Leo XIII drew attention to the fact that the industrial age had reached such a pass that "a small number of very rich men have been able to lay upon the masses of the poor a yoke little better than slavery itself" (*Rerum Novarum*). As a consequence of divorcing religion from business and economic life, the industrial world developed along purely selfish lines. Pope Pius XI in commemorating Leo's great encyclical forty years later (*Quadragesimo Anno*) painted the picture tellingly:

Towards the close of the nineteenth century the new economic methods and the new development of industry had sprung into being in almost all civilized nations and had made such headway that human society appeared more and more divided into two classes. The first, small in numbers enjoyed practically all the comforts so plentifully supplied by modern invention. The second class, comprising the immense multitude of workmen, was made up of those who oppressed by dire poverty, struggled in vain to escape from the straits which encompassed them . . . the wealthy looked on this condition as inevitable from economic causes, and were content to allow charity to relieve the condition of the unfortunate. As if charity could make up for the open violation of justice, a violation often sanctioned by human laws.

Perceiving the way the vicious tenets of Liberalism had built up an unequal and mutually antagonistic society, the Communist proclaimed and proclaims destruction of the whole social order. Class is hostile to class, so make a classless so-

ciety. This was and is the cry of Communism. To make a classless society is about as practical as making an oceanless ocean. Russia and Mexico today prove that. For in both countries proud of their Communism there are two classes, the rulers who have everything and the ruled who have what the rulers choose to give them. Not a classless society but a Christian society in which worker and employer realize that they belong to one industrial family, with mutual rights and duties, mutual interests and responsibilities. This is the application of the fourth commandment to the social order. This is social justice. For social justice means nothing more than the family spirit prevailing in the relationship between management and men. The direct opposite to antagonism.

For example the wage system that is inherent in our modern industrial society is based on the contract. The contract is an agreement willingly entered into by two people. Whether the employer is dealing with one man or a million men he is obliged to treat them as men who share with him the same dignity of manhood. As Pope Leo XIII reminds employers: “. . . that their work people are not their slaves; that they must respect in every man his dignity as a man and as a Christian; that labor is nothing to be ashamed of, if we listen to right reason and Christian philosophy, but is an honorable employment enabling a man to sustain his life in an upright and creditable way; and that it is shameful and inhuman to treat men like chattels to make money by, or to look upon them merely as so much muscle or physical power.”

So it is that the fourth commandment obliges the employer to pay a just wage. The wage scale is not to be whatever the employer can make it or the employee will accept. A just wage does not merely depend on a free contract. The worker may not say: “I will take whatever you give me.” The employer may not say: “I will give as little as you will take.” This falsehood is what ran through the whole industrial system. It was built upon greed as Pope Pius XI reminded all men of good will when he addressed to the world his encyclicals. “Capital for too long has claimed the major part of profits leaving to the laborer only the minimum sufficient for

existence, and the continuance of his class. This was the theory of the liberal Manchester school of economics, and while its unjust practice was not universal, it must be said that the common drift of economic and social philosophy was in its direction" (*Quadragesimo Anno*).

A just wage is a living wage. A living wage is a family wage. "Every effort must be made that fathers of families receive a wage sufficient to meet adequately ordinary domestic needs." In estimating a just wage capital and labor must combine in a common effort. The profits of business belong exclusively neither to one nor to the other. They belong to both. It is both foolish and wrong for capital to say: "I furnish the money, the plant, the tools and take the bigger risk so I shall take all the profits I can, making the wage as little as I can." It is just as foolish and wrong for labor to say: "I furnish the necessary brain and brawn that must make your enterprise go, so I shall demand as high a wage as I can get by every means in my power." The state of a business has to be considered in determining a just wage for to demand wages higher than a business can stand and survive, is to spell ruin to the worker as well as to the business. No business, no work, poor business, insufficient work. Capital, labor, government must combine in settling the question of a just wage. A scale of wages either too low or too high will cause unemployment. To raise or to lower wages merely with an eye on private profit is wrong. A wage scale should be established sufficient to furnish employment to the greatest number. The rights and duties of employer and employee are such that they must ever agree with the public interest. The false notion that both capital and labor have to consider *only* themselves will never bring about social justice. Such a notion is rooted in greed which Pope Pius XI insists is the real cause of our disjointed social system. Capital thinks only of capital, labor only of labor. Even from a practical angle of what avail this selfish, unjust, uncharitable attitude if the purchaser is unable to purchase and the consumer not able to consume?

The fourth commandment not only places a duty upon the employer but also on the employee. Just as it is against the

fourth commandment for the employer to treat his employees as chattel so is it wrong for the employee to fail in giving an honest day's work for an honest day's pay. No one looking at the history of labor in this country can fail to see the great strides that have been made in bettering labor conditions within the space of even one generation. It may be truly said that labor has arrived. But in its undoubtedly strong position today in the body politic lies its danger. What is that? Bad leadership. In both national and local affairs labor has suffered from bad leadership. Knowingly or not the voice of the leader has constantly stressed the need of better working conditions and rarely stressed the need of better workers and finer work. Time and again coercion has been the great instrument appealed to, justice and charity rarely mentioned. Labor leaders have too frequently instilled the warfare attitude in their followers, imbuing them with the false Communistic theory of class antagonism. Strikes and lockouts have been resorted to under the slightest provocation to the great harm of the labor movement and the great disgust of the suffering public. Until leadership is Christian there can be no true labor movement. Until there is a truly Christian labor movement there can be no social order.

That is why the Popes from Leo XIII to Pius XII have insisted that only a social order built upon co-operation can endure. For only such a social order is Christian. And this co-operation is not merely between capital and labor but between all the elements in the social body. For true co-operation means charity. And without charity no social order can survive. Pope Pius XI stated the solution very clearly in *Quadragesimo Anno*:

Charity cannot take the place of justice unfairly withheld. . . . But justice alone even though most favorably observed can remove indeed the cause of social strife, but can *never* bring about a union of hearts and minds. Yet this *union* binding men together is the main principle of stability in all institutions that aim at establishing social peace. . . . In its absence as repeated experience proves the wisest regulations come to nothing. . . . When

all sections of society have the intimate conviction that they are members of a single *family* and children of the same Heavenly Father, and further that they are "one body in Christ and everyone members one of another," then only will it be possible to unite all in harmonious striving for the common good.

To appreciate the fourth commandment is to understand that there must be loyal and loving subjection to all authority as there must be kindly and beneficent exercise of all authority in the home, the nation, the social order. And this for the happiness of human life. God in creating man made man His debtor, His dependent. To have a world as God would have it there must be order. There can be no order in the small but most important unit of the home or in the large unit that is the nation unless there is authority properly exercised and obedience loyally rendered.

DISCUSSION CLUB QUESTIONNAIRE

LESSON I

(Pages 3 to 6)

In what part of the Bible do we find the fourth commandment?

On how many tablets was God's Law written?

On what tablet do we find the fourth commandment?

Is the fourth commandment positive or negative?

Why may this commandment be called of supreme importance?

How does St. Paul state the scope of the fourth commandment?

What is the meaning of honoring a person?

What does the idea include?

Does this commandment express a law of nature?

Why do children owe obedience to their parents?

What is the motive of honor in this commandment?

What is the relation between the duties of parents and the obedience of children?

How does Christ and how does St. Paul speak of this obedience?

Is the love of the child for the parent the same as the love of friendship?

What elements are contained in this love?

When are children freed from the obligation of obedience?

When are they freed from the obligation of respect?

Is parental authority based on the Natural Law? Is it despotic?

What does parental responsibility include?

How does St. Thomas Aquinas express parental responsibility?

How does Pope Pius XI express it?

How does Pope Leo XIII express it?

Why has not the State the right of education over the child?

Why is the parents' claim superior to any other in the matter of education?

LESSON II

(Pages 7 to 9)

What is the family?

Why did God establish the family?

Prove this from Scripture.

Why is the family called a natural society?

How is the family established and maintained?

What did Aristotle say of the family?

Is the family "merely" a natural society?

How does the marriage contract affect the family?

Why must there be authority in the family?

In whom does it reside?

Who is the head of the family?

What does the development of the child call for?

Do Church and State substitute for the authority of parents in education?

What does Pope Pius XI say of the preparation for parenthood?

What does he condemn in some modern parents?
How does he wish parental authority to be used?
Does God give authority to parents for their own advantage?
How is the Holy Family the model family?

LESSON III

(Pages 9 to 11)

What is the lesson of Nazareth?
Is the fourth commandment concerned only with the relation of parents and children?
Whence does all authority come, according to St. Paul?
Into what three groups is human life divided?
Is each group sufficient unto itself?
What is the State?
Does it consist immediately of individuals?
What is the first fact in history?
How did the State develop?
Why was the State established?
What is meant by the general welfare?
Why must the State have authority?
How does the fourth commandment affect the State?
Is the democratic form the only good form of government?
How do our rulers receive authority in our form of government?
Where is the residuary of authority in our nation?
How does authority come to our rulers?
Is American democracy a particular kind of democracy?
On what does it rest?
From what does the Constitution flow?
What is our charter of liberties?
What are the pillars of American freedom?
What is our true tree of liberty?
Was our government a copy of others or a new experiment?
Does our Declaration proclaim citizens' rights as citizens?

Were the truths appealed to in the Declaration old or new?
How does the Declaration speak of man?
Who first proclaimed these truths?
Is the Declaration a statement of exclusively American faith?

LESSON IV

(Pages 11 to 14)

Show the parallelism of Bellarmine and Jefferson.
Is our form of government unchangeable?
Should it be considered suitable to all nations?
Have we a right to claim all other forms of government inferior to ours?
What is our real task as Americans in our devotion to democracy?
Can there be any form of real government without authority?
Who is the author of authority according to Pope Leo XIII?
What are all rulers bound to realize in using their authority?
Why do rulers possess authority?
When will the majesty of the law meet with loyal support from citizens?
Is unjust rebellion only an act against government?
Whom do rulers represent according to Catholic doctrine?
Do we obey our rulers for worthy personal reasons?
What does good citizenship imply in our democracy?
Why and how should we as Americans use the ballot?
What is the meaning of party loyalty?
Why does the citizen join a political party?
When does a political party forfeit the right to the citizens' loyalty?
Give an example of bad citizenship in the use of the ballot.
Is it wrong to vote the split ticket?

LESSON V

(Pages 14 to 16)

What is Church authority and how does this commandment apply to it?

Prove that our Saviour founded the Church.

What do the words, "keys," "locking" and "unlocking" mean?

Did Church authority end with the death of St. Peter?

Where does Church authority come from?

Who holds Church authority today?

Is Church authority personal authority?

Who holds supreme authority over the Church?

How does Church authority secure the liberty of the individual?

What effect has Church authority on the individuals of the Church?

Who is back of the teaching and sanctifying power of the Church?

What do the sacraments do for the individual?

Who are the two important persons in sacramental life?

How is Church authority wielded?

Why should I obey the precepts of the Church?

Do we form the Church by uniting in belief and prayer?

Did the Apostles start the Church by following our Lord?

What is the position of the Pope in the Church? The Bishops?

What position do the priests occupy?

What does hierarchy mean?

What does St. Ignatius say of the hierarchy?

LESSON VI

(Pages 16 to 20)

Is there a Church law on education? State it.

Where does education begin and who is the first and most important educator?

Does the school take precedence over the home in education?

What is the modern American mistake in education?
What defeats the purpose of the American school?
How may we keep America safe?
What is the real dangerous element in American life?
What place does the child hold in the home?
What does Pope Pius XI say of the education of children?
Why is the school necessary?
What duty has the State regarding the school?
When does the State exceed its right in education?
What right have the parents and what duty in regard to the choice of a school?
What has the Supreme Court decided on the school question?
What have the bishops of our country said regarding the school?
What does Canon Law state about the school?
Who may allow the attendance of the Catholic child at a non-Catholic school?
What conditions must be fulfilled during such an attendance?
Have the Popes spoken clearly on the school question?
Is a Catholic school one in which some religious instruction is given?
What are the necessary elements that must be in the Catholic school?
The fourth commandment obliges parents to the full care of children. Explain.
Is it the ordinary function of the State to teach?
What precisely is the State entitled to in the educational field?
What should the State do for parents unable to finance their children's education?
What is the State to do if its citizens believe in different religions?
How much liberty should parents have in the choice of schools?
Does the teacher act for the State or the parent?

May the State place requirements for its teachers?
Whence does the teachers' right to teach come from, the State or the parent?

LESSON VII

(Pages 20 to 23)

Whence arise authority and obedience in human life?
How may all the commandments be summed up?
Do the commandments crush the nature of man?
What happens when man refuses to follow the commandments?
Name the one unmistakable lesson of history.
Name another social group besides the family, the Church, the State.
How does the fourth commandment apply to this group?
What is the key to the solution of the modern social question?
Is social legislation capable of rebuilding the social order?
How did Pope Leo XIII state the social problem in 1891?
What was the result of divorcing religion from business life?
What did Pius XI say of the result of the new development of industry?
How did the wealthy look on this development?
Is charity the solution of the wage-problem?
What remedy does Communism offer?
Is this remedy adequate?
How has the remedy succeeded in Russia and Mexico?
How would the observance of the fourth commandment secure social justice?
What is the basis for the modern wage system?
What does Pope Leo XIII say should be the attitude of the employer to his employee?
Does the just wage depend merely on a free contract?
Is the worker free to accept any wage he chooses?
What was the false theory of the Manchester school of economics?

LESSON VIII

(Pages 23 to 25)

Explain the meaning of a living wage.

How is it to be estimated?

Which group has the claim on the profits of business, capital or labor?

What three groups must combine in determining a just wage?

What is the result of a too high or too low wage-scale?

What principle must be kept in mind in determining a wage scale?

What is the result if capital considers only its interests and labor does likewise?

What causes such a notion?

How does the fourth commandment affect the employee?

What is Labor's danger today?

What have the leaders of Labor failed to stress?

What ideas have they too often presented to their followers?

What is the main requisite for good labor leadership and a good labor movement?

What must form the basis of an enduring social order?

Is justice alone sufficient to found a good social order? Is charity?

What is the binding principle of permanent peace between labor and capital?

What must all sections of society realize before the common good will be the aim of all?

How may the fourth commandment be expressed in terms of human happiness?

What relationship does man bear toward God as His creature?

Explain what this relationship implies in terms of order. According to St. Thomas Aquinas how do we perfect ourselves?

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