

Ten After Ten Session 99: The First Commandment

“I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. You shall have no other gods before me. You shall not make for yourself a graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; you shall not bow down to them or serve them.”

2084 God makes himself known by recalling his all-powerful, loving, and liberating action in the history of the one he addresses...God’s first call and just demand is that man accept him and worship him.

2085 The one and true God first reveals his glory to Israel. The revelation of the vocation and truth of man is linked to the revelation of God. Man’s vocation is to make God manifest by acting in conformity with his creation “in the image and likeness of God.”

2086 “The first commandment embraces faith, hope, and charity. When we say ‘God’ we confess a constant, unchangeable being, always the same, faithful and just, without any evil. It follows that we must necessarily accept his words and have complete faith in him and acknowledge his authority.

2087 Our moral life has its source in faith in God who reveals his love to us. St. Paul speaks of the “obedience of faith” as our first obligation. He shows that “ignorance of God” is the principle and explanation of all moral deviations.

2088 The first commandment requires us to nourish and protect our faith with prudence and vigilance, and to reject everything that is opposed to it.

2089 *Incredulity* is the neglect of revealed truth or the willful refusal to assent to it. Heresy is the obstinate post-baptismal denial of some truth which must be believed with divine and catholic faith, or it is likewise an obstinate doubt concerning the same; apostasy is the total repudiation of the Christian faith; schism is the refusal of submission to the Roman Pontiff or of communion with the members of the Church subject to him.

2090 When God reveals Himself and calls him, man cannot fully respond to the divine love by his own powers. He must hope that God will give him the capacity to love Him in return and to act in conformity with the commandments of charity. Hope is the confident expectation of divine blessing and the beatific vision of God.

2091 The first commandment is also concerned with sins against hope, namely, despair and presumption: By despair, man ceases to hope for his personal salvation from God, for help in attaining it or for the forgiveness of his sins. Despair is contrary to God’s goodness, to his justice—for the Lord is faithful to his promises—and to his mercy.

2092 There are two kinds of presumption. Either man presumes upon his own capacities, (hoping to be able to save himself without help from on high), or he presumes upon God’s almighty power or his mercy (hoping to obtain his forgiveness without conversion and glory without merit).

2093 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.

2094 One can sin against God's love in various ways:

—indifference neglects or refuses to reflect on divine charity; it fails to consider its convenient goodness and denies its power.

—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; it can imply refusal to give oneself over to the prompting of charity.

—acedia or spiritual sloth goes so far as to refuse the joy that comes from God and to be repelled by divine goodness.

—hatred of God comes from pride. It is contrary to love of God, whose goodness it denies, and whom it presumes to curse as the one who forbids sins and inflicts punishments.