

## Ten After Ten Session 104: The Fourth Commandment

“Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long in the land which the Lord your God gives you.”

2197 God has willed that, after him, we should honor our parents to whom we owe life and who have handed on to us the knowledge of God. We are obliged to honor and respect all those whom God, for our good, has vested with his authority.

2198 This commandment is expressed in positive terms of duties to be fulfilled. It introduces the subsequent commandments which are concerned with particular respect for life, marriage, earthly goods, and speech.

2199 The fourth commandment is addressed expressly to children in their relationship to their father and mother, because this relationship is the most universal...It requires honor, affection, and gratitude toward elders and ancestors. Finally, it extends to the duties of pupils to teachers, employees to employers, subordinates to leaders, citizens to their country, and to those who administer or govern it.

2200 Respecting this commandment provides, along with spiritual fruits, temporal fruits of peace and prosperity. Conversely, failure to observe it brings great harm to communities and to individuals.

2201 The conjugal community is established upon the consent of the spouses. Marriage and the family are ordered to the good of the spouses and to the procreation and education of children. The love of the spouses and the begetting of children create among members of the same family personal relationships and primordial responsibilities.

2202 A man and a woman united in marriage, together with their children, form a family. This institution is prior to any recognition by public authority, which has an obligation to recognize it. It should be considered the normal reference point by which the different forms of family relationship are to be evaluated.

2203 In creating man and woman, God instituted the human family and endowed it with its fundamental constitution. Its members are persons equal in dignity. For the common good of its members and of society, the family necessarily has manifold responsibilities, rights, and duties.

2204 The Christian family constitutes a specific revelation and realization of ecclesial communion, and for this reason it can and should be called a domestic church.

2205 The Christian family is a communion of persons, a sign and image of the communion of the Father and the Son in the Holy Spirit. In the procreation and education of children it reflects the Father's work of creation. It is called to partake of the prayer and sacrifice of Christ.

2206 The relationships within the family bring an affinity of feelings, affections and interests, arising above all from the members' respect for one another. The family is a privileged community called to achieve a sharing of thought and common deliberation by the spouses as well as their eager cooperation as parents in the children's upbringing.

2207 The family is the original cell of social life. It is the natural society in which husband and wife are called to give themselves in love and in the gift of life. Authority, stability, and a life of relationships within the family constitute the foundations for freedom, security, and fraternity within society.

2208 The family should live in such a way that its members learn to care and take responsibility for the young, the old, the sick, the handicapped, and the poor.

2209 The family must be helped and defended by appropriate social measures...Following the principle of subsidiarity, larger communities should take care not to usurp the family's prerogatives or interfere in its life.

2210 The importance of the family for the life and well-being of society entails a particular responsibility for society to support and strengthen marriage and the family. Civil authority should consider it a grave duty to acknowledge the true nature of marriage and the family, to protect and foster them, to safeguard public morality, and promote domestic prosperity.

2211 The political community has a duty to honor the family, to assist it, and to ensure especially:

the freedom to establish a family, have children, and bring them up in keeping with the family's own moral and religious convictions; the protection of the stability of the marriage bond and the institution of the family; the freedom to profess one's faith, to hand it on, and raise one's children in it, with the necessary means and institutions; the right to private property, to free enterprise, to obtain work and housing, and the right to emigrate; in keeping with the country's institutions, the right to medical care, assistance for the aged, and family benefits; the protection of security and health, especially with respect to dangers like drugs, pornography, alcoholism, etc.; the freedom to form associations with other families and so to have representation before civil authority.

2212 The fourth commandment illuminates other relationships in society...The neighbor is not a "unit" in the human collective; he is "someone" who by his known origins deserves particular attention and respect.

2213 Human communities are made up of persons. Governing them well is not limited to guaranteeing rights and fulfilling duties such as honoring contracts. Right relations between employers and employees, between those who govern and citizens, presuppose a natural good will in keeping with the dignity of human persons concerned for justice and fraternity.