

DECALOGUE OF THE LAWS GIVEN BY CHRIST, OR, IN TRUTH, THE LAWS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

1. The Lord your God, the Lord is One (cf. Deut. 6 : 4), known in the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit; in the unbegotten Father; in the engendered Son, the Word without beginning, outside time, outside all passion, who, having anointed himself and assumed our flesh, was called Christ; and in the Holy Spirit who, him also, comes from the Father, not by birth, but by procession. He is one single God. And he is the true God: the Lord one in the Trinity of Persons, indivisible in his nature, his will, his glory, his power, his energy, and in all the marks of his Divinity. It is he alone you will love, and he alone you will adore, with all your thought, with all your heart, with all your force (cf. Deut. 6 : 5). His words and his orders will be in your heart, so that you accomplish them, that you meditate on them, that you say them, sitting, walking, lying down, upright (cf. Deut. 6 : 7). Remember the Lord your God continually (cf. Deut. 8 : 18), fear him, him alone (cf. Deut. 6 : 13), do not forget him, and do not forget his commandments. It is in this way that he will himself give you the power to do his will. For he does not demand of you anything other than to fear him, love him, and walk in all his ways (cf. Deut. 10 : 12). It is he who is your glory, and it is he who is your God (cf. Deut. 10 : 21).

Do not look for the dispassion and the invisibility of Angels who rule the world, nor the great malice of he who is fallen from the heavens, nor the wisdom, the penetration, the ingenuity with which he pursued error, and do not glorify any of those powers by rendering him the same honour due to God. Do not scrutinise the grandeur of heaven and the numerous forms of its movement, the shining of the sun, the clarity of the moon, the sparkling of other stars, the good that the air does when we breathe, the prodigality of the sea and of the land, and do not deify any of these. For all these things are the servants and the creatures of God alone: they were drawn out of nothing by his word. For he spoke and they came, he ordered and they were created (cf. Ps. 33 : 9). It is he alone, the Master and the Creator of the universe, which you glorify as your God, it is to him alone that you will attach yourself through love, and it is before him that you will repent yourself day and night for your voluntary and involuntary faults. For he is compassionate and merciful, patient, full of pity (cf. Ps. 103 : 8), doing good forever: he has promised and given the heavenly Kingdom, the perpetual Kingdom, the existence which does not suffer, the immortal life and the light which has no evening, for the enjoyment of those who venerate him, adore him, love him and keep his precepts. But he is also a jealous God (cf. Ex. 20 : 5), a just judge, a terrifying law enforcer. Those who offend him, who are unfaithful to him, who transgress his precepts, he sends them

to eternal punishment, to the fire which is never extinguished, to continual misery, to inconsolable affliction, to a clothing of black shadow, to a sombre and overwhelmed land, to the pitiful grinding of teeth (cf. Matt. 8 : 12), to the poisonous worm which never sleeps (cf. Mark 9 : 48), which he has prepared for the first apostate who submitted to evil, and for all those who with him were separated from God, who followed him and who rebelled against their Creator, in their works, their words and their thoughts.

2. You will not make any image which resembles the beings which are in the heaven on high, on the earth below, and in the waters (Ex. 20 : 4), in order to adore them or glorify them like gods. For they are all only the creatures of God, who, at the end of the ages, took flesh from a virgin womb, appeared on the earth, lived among men (cf. Bar. 3 : 38), suffered for their salvation, died, was resurrected, rose to heaven with his body, and is seated at the right hand of Majesty, in the highest (cf. Heb. 1 : 3). It is with this body that he will return in glory to judge the living and the dead (cf. 2 Tim. 4 : 1). It is therefore of him, who was made man for us, that, through love for him, you will make an icon; of him so that through it you will remember, and it is of him that through it you will adore, by raising by means of it your intellect to that venerated body of the Saviour, who sits at the right hand of the Father in the heaven.

So you will represent and venerate the images of the saints, not as gods, for that is not permitted, but as the relation which unites us to them, for the position and the immense honour which is conferred, when the intellect, through the icons, relates to them, as Moses created the icons of Cherubim in the sanctuary (cf. Ex. 25 : 18). This Holy of Holies was the image of that which is higher than the heavens. This cosmic sanctuary was the icon of the entire world. And Moses called it sacred, not because it glorified created things, but because through it the God who created the world was glorified. You then, do not deify the icons of Christ our Master, nor those of the saints. But through them you will adore Him who has in every way created us in his own image, and who later, in his indescribable love of man and his blessing, took on himself the human image and clothed himself in it.

You will venerate not only the divine icon, but also the image of his cross. For it is an immense symbol. It is the trophy which Christ won from the devil and the total phalanx of his adversaries. That is why they tremble and run away when they see it represented. This symbol, before having become a real form, was greatly glorified in the prophets and was the

greatest of prodigies. But it is with the second coming of Him who was suspended on it, the Lord Jesus Christ who should come to judge the living and the dead, that this terrible and great symbol will truly arrive, with power and great glory (cf. Matt. 24 : 30). Glorify it then now, so that you can see it properly and be glorified with him. And because the saints were crucified with the Lord, you will venerate their icons, by making the sign of the cross on your face and while remembering their works: namely, communion in the sufferings of Christ. Likewise, venerate the holy urns which contain the relics of their bones. For the grace of God is not departed from them, like the divinity is not departed from the venerated body of Christ since his life giving death. If you do this, and if you glorify those who have glorified God while being revealed a perfect by their works in the love of God, you also will be glorified by God and you will sing with David, when he said: 'God, I have honoured them greatly who love you' (Ps. 139 : 17).

3. You will not invoke the name of the Lord your God in vain (Ex. 20 : 7, not for things of the earth, or through fear of men, or for any personal gain, while pronouncing a false promise. For perjury is the denial of God. That is why you should never swear for anything (cf. Matt. 5 : 34), but you rather absolutely escape any promise, for it is though swearing an oath that perjury comes about, which distances from God and places him among the wicked, whoever commits it. But if you say the truth in all your words, you will dispense by that means the assurance of a promise and oath. And if it happens to you one day that you engage yourself in an oath, which is detestable, if this into which you have bound yourself involves the divine law, you must do it because it is the law, but you must demand that you be corrected for having simply sworn, while imploring with compassion, with supplication, with grief and the hard asceticism of the body, the mercy of God who has said: 'You will not swear'. But if this to which you have engaged yourself is forbidden by the law, be careful not to accomplish the wickedness because of your oath, so as not to be counted alongside Herod, who killed the prophet (cf. Matt. 14 : 7-12). Cancel that unique oath, find the resolution to never again swear, and call on yourself the pity of God, while giving yourself labour, until tears, to use the remedies of which we have spoken.

4. The first day of the week, which is called Sunday – the day of the Lord (cf. Rev. 1 : 10) – because he was consecrated to the Lord who, on this day, was resurrected from the dead and showed and confirmed in advance the common resurrection in which every human work will repose; this day therefore, you will sanctify it (cf. Ex. 20 : 8), you will not do any work of the normal kind, except the necessary, and you will give repose to all those who depend on you and live with you, so that together you can glorify Him who acquired us through his own death, who was resurrected and who resurrected with him our created being. And remind yourself of the age to come, meditate on all the commandments and all the precepts of the Lord, examine in yourself if you have not transgressed or

omitted anything, and correct yourself in everything. On this day of the Lord, be faithfully attached to the temple of God, remain in the assemblies which apply to you, commune with a pure faith and an irreproachable conscience to the holy body and holy blood of Christ, leave for a more rigorous life, renew yourself and prepare yourself to receive the eternal goods to come, because of which, and this applies on other days, you will not abuse terrestrial good things. But Sunday, to remain close to God, you will leave them behind, save that which is completely necessary and without which it is impossible to live. It is thus that God will be for you a place of refuge, and you will not leave. You will not light the fire of passions, and you will not carry the accusation of sin. You will sanctify in this way the day of rest, by celebrating the cessation of evil.

On Sunday you will join in the great and legal feasts, while doing the same things and while abstaining from the same things.

5. Honour your father and your mother (Ex. 20 : 12). Through them God sent you into life, and they are, after God, the source of your being. Therefore, you too, will honour and them and love them after God, if your love for them contributes to your love for God. But if you love for them does not contribute to it, go far away from them immediately. So if they are heterodox, they are an obstacle to you, and particularly for the true saving faith, not only should you escape from them, but you should hate them, and not them alone, but all your parentage, all those who are related to you by any other affection and any other tie, your limbs themselves and their desires, your body itself and the inclination it has for the passions. For 'if anyone does not love his father, his mother, his wife, his children, his brothers, and even his own soul, if he does not take up the cross and does not follow me, he is not worthy of me' (Luke 14 : 26; Matt. 10 : 38), Christ says.

So it must be for the parents of your body, for your friends, for your brothers. But those who are close through faith, who are not an obstacle to salvation, you should honour and love them. And if it is so for the parents of your body, how much more should you honour and love those who become your parents through the Spirit. They have made you pass from being to being-good, they have transmitted to you the illumination of spiritual knowledge, they have taught the manifestation of the truth, they have regenerated you through the bath of the new creation (cf. Titus 3 : 5), they have given you're the hope of the resurrection, of immortality, of the perpetual Kingdom and of heritage, from being unworthy they have made you worthy of eternal good, from earthly they have made you heavenly, from temporal they have made you eternal, son and disciple not of a man, but of the God-man Jesus Christ (cf. John 6 : 45, citing Is. 54 : 13) who has given you the Spirit of filiation (cf. Rom. 8 : 15). It is he who said: 'Do not call anyone father or mother on the earth. For you have only one father and one mother: Christ' (Matt. 23 : 9-

10). You therefore owe all honour and all love to the spiritual fathers, because honour which is rendered them is due to Christ, to the Holy Spirit in whom you have received filiation, and to the heavenly Father from whom all paternity draws its name in the heaven and on the earth (cf. Eph. 3 : 15).

You will force yourself throughout your life to have a spiritual father, to declare to him all faults and all thoughts, and to receive from him remedy and pardon. For to the spiritual father has been given the power to tie and untie souls. All which they bind up on the earth will be bound in the heaven. And all which they unbind on the earth will be unbound in the heaven (cf. Matt. 18 : 18). The received from Christ this grace and this power. This is why you will hear them, you will not contradict them, so as not to send your soul to perdition. If in effect he who contradicts his parents in the flesh in matters not governed by the divine Law, is condemned to death according to the Law (cf. Ex. 21 : 17), how will he who contradicts his parents in the Spirit not chase away the Spirit of God and not lose his own soul? That is why you should not cease from inquiring from and listening to your parents in spirit, so that your soul can be saved and that you inherit eternal good without admixture.

6. You will not commit unlawful sexual acts (Ex. 20 : 14), and you will not become a limb of the prostitute (1 Cor. 6 : 15) instead of being a limb of Christ, so that you not are cut off from the divine body, and do not fall from the inheritance of God and get thrown into Gehenna. For if the daughter of a priest, if she prostitutes herself outdoors, is burned according to the Law (cf. Lev. 21 : 9), for having covered her father in shame, how much more he who inflicts such mess on the body of Christ will be liable to eternal punishment. But if you understand (cf. Matt. 22 : 30), engage yourself in the asceticism of virginity, so that you can be entirely given to God and attached to him with a perfect love, while consecrating yourself to him through all your life, while taking care of the things of the Lord without letting yourself be distracted, while embracing in advance the things of the life to come and while conducting yourself on the earth like an angel of God. For virginity is the way of angels, and in body it is angels that they resemble, as much as possible, those who are consecrated to virginity; it is to the virgin Son, engendered from the first by a virgin Father and born in the flesh, at the end of the ages, from a virgin Mother; and it is to the Spirit, unspeakably coming from the Father alone, not through birth, but from procession. It is with this God that there is a resemblance and unity, in incorruptible marriage, for one who has chosen true virginity, and who is virgin of soul and of body, apparelled in the beauties of virginity in every sense, in his reason, in his mind.

But if you have not chosen to be virgin and if you have not promised it to God, it is allowed to find a woman in the Lord following the law, to live with her alone, to have her for yourself like a vase of election to sanctify yourself (cf. 1 Thes. 4 : 4), while abstaining from other women. And you

can perfectly abstain from them, if you guard yourself against stormy meetings, if you do not allow yourself to say or hear anything which pushes you to adultery, if you turn away from them the glance of your body and your soul, as much as you can, and if you habituate yourself to see but not attach yourself to beautiful faces. For he who watches a woman so as to feel desire for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart (cf. Matt. 5 : 28); while this is impure in the eyes of Christ, who sees what is in the heart. And because the unlucky will fall into the shame of acts which the body does. Why do I speak here of prostitution, adultery, and of all the dirt which is in our nature itself? It is because of the power of seeing and attaching himself to the beauty of the body that a man is captured without escape in free behaviour against nature. It is necessary therefore to dig out from yourself the bitter roots so that you do not bear the fruits of death, but that you will carry the fruits of purity and of sanctification which is in it, without which none will see the Lord (cf. Heb. 12 : 14).

7. You will not kill (Ex. 20 : 13), so as not to fall from your state of being an adopted child of Him who made the dead live, and so as not to be adopted, because of your acts, by him who has since the start killed man (cf. John 8 : 44). For murder proceeds from a cut, the cut proceeds from an injury, the injury proceeds from anger, and anger comes to us from damage done to us by others, by a cut which they have given us, or from an injury they have given by their talk. This is why to those who take your coat, do not refuse them your shirt (Luke 6 : 29), Christ has said. Do not beat in response he who has beaten you. And do not injure one who has injured you. Thus you will deliver yourself from the murderer's fall, that you will deliver the one who has mistreated you, and that you will receive, depending on your self, the pardon for faults that you committed against God. For it is said: 'Forgive, and he will forgive you' (Matt. 6 : 14). But he who says and does evil will be condemned to eternal punishment (cf. 2 Thess. 1 : 9). For 'he who says to his brother "fool", will be in danger of hell fire' (Matt. 5 : 22), Christ said.

Therefore if you have rooted out evil while cultivating beatitude of gentleness in the soul, glorify Christ, who teaches the virtues and helps us to accomplish them: without him, as you have understood, we cannot do anything good (cf. John 15 : 5). But if you have not been able to escape anger, condemn yourself for being irritated, and repent before God and before him who has heard from the bad things you said to him, who you have harmed. For he who repents at the origin of a sin does not see it to the end. But he who remains insensible in small faults, through them he will fall into great faults.

8. You will not steal (Ex. 20 : 15), so as he who knows secrets, because you have despised him, does not increase your punishment. Therefore moreover you will dispense secretly of your goods to those who have need of them, so as to receive a hundredfold, from God who sees in secret (cf.

Matt. 6 : 4), the eternal life in the age to come (cf. Mark 10 : 30).

9. You will not spread lies about others, and thereby you will not resemble him who calumniated God before Eve in the beginning, and who was cursed by God (cf. Gen. 3 : 14). Therefore, moreover, if this does not hurt many people in the world, you must hide the sliding of your neighbour, so as not to resemble Ham, but rather resemble Shem and Japhet, and to obtain blessing (cf. Gen. 3 : 14).

10. You will not covet what your neighbours possess (Ex. 20 : 17): neither house, nor money, nor anything belonging to your neighbour. For covetousness, conceived in the soul, gives birth to sin. And sin fulfilled gives birth to death (James 1 : 15). While not desiring anything of strangers, you will abstain from stealing because of cupidity, if you can. Then, rather, it is from your own possessions that you must give to those who ask, you will have compassion, as much as is permitted, to those who need your pity, you will not turn away from those who need to borrow (Matt. 5 : 42), and if you find a thing which has been lost, you will return it to the one it belongs to, even when it belongs to your enemy (cf. Ex. 23 : 4-5). For it is thus that you will transform yourself and you will defeat evil with good, as Christ has commanded you.

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It is by guarding and keeping these precepts with all your force, and by living in them, that you will deposit the treasure of piety in your soul, that you will be pleasing to God, that you will receive the benefits of God and of the men of God, and that you will inherit eternal good. We can obtain them, all of us, through the grace and the love which is given to men by the Lord, our God and our Saviour Jesus Christ, to whom is due all glory, honour and worship, and to his Father who has no beginning, and to the Holy Spirit, good and life-giving, now and forever, and unto the ages of ages. Amen.