



REBUILD *this* TEMPLE

DAY 8

SUNDAY, MARCH 16, 2025

THE FIRST COMMANDMENT

The Ten Commandments guide us in aligning our lives in a mature and healthy relationship with God. Among these sacred laws, the first commandment carries vital significance. In Exodus 20:2-3 and Deuteronomy 5:6-7 we read, “I am the LORD your God: you shall not have strange Gods before me.” This directive invites us to acknowledge God’s unrivaled place in our lives, prompting us to eliminate anything that competes with Him.

The First Commandment is foundational because it roots all other commandments and moral teachings. While each commandment is indispensable, the order reflects their importance. The first is paramount as it addresses the core of our relationship with God, calling us to dedicate our hearts, minds, and souls entirely to Him. It is through worship and fidelity to God that the sincerity of our adherence to the remaining commandments is expressed. The First Commandment challenges us to wrestle with the difference of God being important to us versus God being more important to us than anything else.

Understanding why God commands exclusive devotion requires considering the Creator’s purpose for us. As Saint Augustine famously declared, “Our hearts are restless until they rest in You.” We are created by God, for God, shaped to worship and to exist in communion with Him. Worshiping God alone aligns us with our intended purpose, nurturing humility, gratitude, and a profound trust in His providence. Our hearts are inherently designed for worship. If we do not worship God, we inevitably turn to created things—be they status, wealth, or pleasure—to fill the spiritual void. However, only God can satisfy the deepest longings of the human spirit. Placing anything else in God’s place leads to the spiritual maladies of idolatry and emptiness.

GOING DEEPER

In modern life, this commandment faces significant challenges. Secular values, materialism, and an array of distractions subtly vie for our allegiance. Each can become an “idol” if allowed to overshadow our commitment to God. Here, a regular examination of conscience serves as a vital tool in maintaining our devout focus. Consider these reflection questions to recognize possible infidelities to the First Commandment in your daily life:

1. If I were brutally honest with myself, does my daily life and the practical, concrete actions of it reveal that God is the center of my life, or just one part among many other things in my life?”
2. Do I dedicate quality time daily to connect with God through prayer?
3. Are there interests or pursuits I anticipate or have a greater affection for than God?
4. Where do I seek my primary security— in God, or through material possessions and social status?
5. Have I become too familiar with God? Have I lost my awe of who God is?
6. Do I approach God with the reverence He deserves in my words and actions?
7. Have I permitted societal norms to cloud my adherence to the teachings of the Church?
8. In my relationships, am I promoting other to growth in faith or subtly encouraging moral relativism?
9. Does my choice of entertainment honor God, or does it subtly numb me from being sensitized to God?
10. Do I regularly express gratitude to God, or do I take His blessings for granted?