

THE COMMANDMENTS.

The Fourth Commandment:

Honour thy father and thy mother.

1. By the Fourth Commandment God requires us (1) to love our parents; (2) respect them, (3) to obey them, (4) to provide for their needs.

2. To *love* our parents is to be devotedly attached to them and to give proof of this on all and every occasion.

3. They have a right to be loved thus, because it is to them, after God, that we owe our existence and there is no trouble or sacrifice so great that they would not willingly undergo on our account.

4. To *respect* them is to pay every deference to them and to bear uncomplainingly with their weaknesses and infirmities and even their defects.

5. We owe them both respect and obedience because they occupy for us on earth the place of God Himself.

6. One way of honouring them is humbly to pray to God that they may succeed in all their undertakings to the full measure of their heart's desire, meet with every consideration in the world outside, and above all be beloved of God and dear to the saints in heaven.

7. Another way of honouring them is to submit to their judgement and wishes in regulating our conduct.

8. St. Paul advises us to the same effect when he says: « Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is just. » (*Eph.* VI, 1.) And again: « Children, obey your parents in all things, for this is well pleasing to the Lord. » (*Coloss.* III, 20.)

9. A third way of honouring our parents is to imitate their good actions and their virtuous life, for obviously the highest mark of esteem we can show to any one is to desire to be like him in everything that makes for rectitude.

10. Still another way of honouring them is to seek their advice and, what is more, to follow it.

11. Lastly, we render to them the honour that is their due by providing for their wants when they are in need, and making their lives as comfortable and free from care as possible.

12. All this Our Lord Himself teaches us in his reproach of the Pharisees: « Why do you also transgress the commandment of God for your tradition? For God said *Honour thy father and thy mother, let him die the death*. But you say: « Whosoever shall say to father or mother: *The gift whatsoever proceedeth from me, shall profit thee*. And he shall not honour his father or his mother, and you have made void the commandment of God for your tradition. » (*Matt. xv, 3-6.*)

13. To perform to the full our obligations towards our parents is our bounden duty at all time, but more especially so during their last illness.

14. Then must every effort be made to have them visited by the priest, so that they may make their confession and be given the Holy Viaticum and Extreme Unction, which every Christian must receive at the approach of death.

15. Thus fortified for their last journey and, as it were, surrounded and accompanied by a glorious band of all the virtues - faith, hope, charity, religion - they will not only meet death without fear, but, for the very reason that it is inevitable, will even long for it as the thing that will open the portals of eternity to them.

16. Honour to our parents does not end with their death. After they are dead we must give them a worthy funeral, place a fitting monument over them, pray and have masses said for them annually and faithfully carry out their last wishes.

17. We cannot too frequently repeat it, we must faithfully carry out their last wishes and pray and have masses said for the repose of their souls.

18. The concluding words of this Commandment, « That thou mayest be long-lived upon the land which the Lord thy God will give thee » mean that God blesses and rewards, often even in this life, the child who honours his father and his mother.

19. The child who outrages his parents or deserts them in their need calls down upon himself the curse of God (*Deut. xxvii, 16*) and is held in horror among men.

20. The perfect model of obedience which all children should imitate is the Child Jesus, Who remained subject to Mary and Joseph during all the time He lived with them at Nazareth.

Explanation of the Plate.

21. *The main picture* represents the Child Jesus helping Mary in housework and Joseph in the business of his trade.

22. *In the small picture on the left* we see the younger Tobias restoring his sight to his father, in the presence of the angel Raphael, by anointing his eyes with the gall of the fish which he had killed during his journey to the country of the Medes. (*Tob.* VI, 5 and XI, 13-15.)

23. *The small picture on the right* shows Our Lord tending His foster-father during his last moments and pressing him lovingly to His Sacred Heart.
