

# **1 The Gift of Family, Life, and Marriage:**

God's Wonderful Order

Defined and Protected by the Fourth, Fifth, and Sixth Commandments

**THE FOURTH COMMANDMENT:** *God protects His institution and gift of family.*

**Honor your father and your mother.**

*What does this mean?*

We should fear and love God

so that we do not despise or anger our parents and other authorities,  
but honor them, serve and obey them, love and cherish them.

*The fourth commandment calls us to believe in the sanctity of God's gift of family and to honor His authority in the home as the foundational authority in all of society and culture. The benevolent dominion that God gave to man over the creation is exercised through the authority of father and mother in the care and nurture of children. The calling of parents to discipline and teach their children is not for their own self-service but for the welfare and benefit of their children. As parents faithfully exercise dominion within the home, children learn to serve their neighbor and the proper exercise of God-given authority in the home and society. The fourth commandment calls both parents and children/earthly authorities and citizens to a life of fidelity and commitment to those they serve in the exercise of God's authority in the home and government.*

CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION strengthens us to honor our parents and the gift of family:

- Do I honor my father and my mother despite their failings because they have been called into their office by God to exercise His authority?
- Have I trusted God to bless me and make my life good when I submit to the authority of my parents and those who are over me?
- Do I faithfully represent God the Father in disciplining, caring for, and catechizing my children?
- Am I threatening, abusive, or overbearing to others in my household or workplace?

**THE FIFTH COMMANDMENT:** *God protects the gift of human life made in His image.*

**You shall not murder.**

*What does this mean?*

We should fear and love God

so that we do not hurt or harm our neighbor in his body,  
but help and support him in every physical need.

*The fifth commandment calls us to believe that all human life from the time of conception is made in the image and likeness of the Triune God of love and is, therefore, holy and sacred. God alone creates life and only God has the right to end a life. God calls us to participate with Him in bringing life into the world, and to nurture and protect life, through His institution of marriage and family. Conception, birth, and the care of children is called "procreation" because we come along side of God and are given the sacred privilege of participating with Him in bringing new life into this world and in caring for that life through the fidelity and trust He has extended to us in marriage and family. By the incarnation of the Son of God in human flesh, Jesus honors and redeems the gift of life and upholds the institutions of marriage and family as God ordained them.*

CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION strengthens us to protect, nurture, and serve the gift of life:

- Have I reserved the actions that create life for marriage?
- Have I treated my neighbor's body and life as gifts of God to him?
- Do I hate anyone, or am I angry with anyone?
- Do I ignore the plight of the helpless, or am I callous toward genuine need?
- Have I injured my neighbor with violent actions, hitting and beating my neighbor, spoken debasing and insulting words, using foul or dirty words to describe my neighbor, or murdered him with thoughts of anger, contempt, and hatred?

**THE SIXTH COMMANDMENT:** *God protects His gift of marriage.*

**You shall not commit adultery.**

*What does this mean?*

We should fear and love God

so that we lead a sexually pure (chaste) and decent life in what we say and do,  
and husband and wife love and honor each other.

*The sixth commandment calls us to believe in the sanctity of marriage as a lifelong commitment of love between a man and a woman. The Triune God calls us to honor the gift of being made in His image and likeness as male and female for the giving and receiving of the gift of love and life in marriage and family. Our God-given identities as either male or female are properly exercised according to our respective stations in life within God's institution of marriage and family as husband or wife and as father or mother. Jesus honors marriage, life, and family in His conception, birth, faithful subordination to Mary and Joseph, and in His union with His bride the Church.*

CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION strengthens us to live a chaste life as a man or woman:

- Have I reserved sexual intimacy for my spouse in marriage?
- Do I engage in any form of sexual immorality?
- Do I give myself freely and selflessly in love to my spouse?
- Have I dishonored my spouse by neglecting to care for my spouse's body, mind, feelings, and needs.

**The Order of Creation** Man was created by God in two genders, male and female: the man was created first from the dust of the ground and the woman was created from the rib in man's side. This does not show a "superior" and "inferior" quality between the man and the woman, but an ordering in this relationship of love between two different individuals. It shows both the uniqueness of each person and the corporate and dependent nature of their relationship. This ordering is a reflection of the ordering between the persons of the Holy Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit: "None is before or after another, none is greater or less than another" (Athanasian Creed), and yet, the Son is "begotten of His Father" and the Holy Spirit "proceeds from the Father and the Son" (Nicene Creed). Holy Scripture teaches that "the head of every man is Christ, the head of woman is man, and the head of Christ is God" (1 Corinthians 11:3).

**The Image of God** That the Triune God of love created man, the male and the female, to reflect His love in the world as a community of loving persons by having dominion over the creation and by being fruitful and multiplying (Genesis 1:26-28)