

First Sunday after Epiphany

THE SECOND COMMANDMENT

Therefore, above all things, our young people should have this Second Commandment earnestly pressed upon them [Deuteronomy 6:7]. They should be trained to hold this and the First Commandment in high regard. And whenever they sin, we must at once be after them with the rod [Proverbs 13:24]. We must hold the commandment before them, and constantly teach it, so that we bring them up not only with punishment, but also in reverence and fear of God [Ephesians 6:4]....

THE FOURTH COMMANDMENT

To the position of fatherhood and motherhood God has given special distinction above all positions that are beneath it: He does not simply command us to love our parents, but to honor them. Regarding our brothers, sisters, and neighbors in general, He commands nothing more than that we love them [Matthew 22:39; 1 John 3:14]. In this way He separates and distinguishes father and mother from all other persons upon earth and places them at His side. For it is a far higher thing to honor someone than to love someone, because honor includes not only love, but also modesty, humility, and submission to a majesty hidden in them. Honor requires not only that parents be addressed kindly and with reverence, but also that, both in the heart and with the body, we demonstrate that we value them very highly, and that, next to God, we regard them as the very highest. For someone we honor from the heart we must also truly regard as high and great....

THE SACRAMENT OF THE ALTAR

Let this, then, be said for encouragement, not only for those of us who are old and grown, but also for the young people, who ought to be brought up in Christian doctrine and understanding. Then the Ten Commandments, the Creed, and the Lord's Prayer might be taught to our youth more easily. Then they would receive them with pleasure and seriousness, and so they would use them from their youth and get used to them. For the old are now nearly past this opportunity. So these goals and others cannot be reached unless we train

the people who are to come after us and succeed us in our office and work. We should do this in order that they also may bring up their children successfully, so that God's Word and the Christian Church may be preserved. Therefore, let every father of a family know that it is his duty, by God's order and command, to teach these things to his children, or to have the children learn what they ought to know [Ephesians 6:4]. Since the children are baptized and received into the Christian Church, they should also enjoy this communion of the Sacrament, in order that they may serve us and be useful to us. They must all certainly help us to believe, love, pray, and fight against the devil.

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