

EXAMINATION OF CONSCIENCE II  
Homily given by Fr. Dennis Koliński, SJC  
St. Peter's Church in Volo  
7 & 14 march 2010

Two weeks ago, in my homily on Confession and Examination of Conscience, I began with the sins against the commandments that govern our relationship with God. Today, I'm going to address those, which govern our relationships with other people

*The Fourth Commandment—Honor Your Father and Your Mother.*

The first obligation under this commandment is obedience to parents and teachers—this mostly applies to children. But the rest of you aren't off the hook. It also demands obedience to legitimate authority by everyone of any age.

And so: I didn't show my parents love and respect. I was impolite or rude to them, argued with them, criticized them, hit them, was ashamed of them. I didn't try to help my parents. I didn't pray for my parents, while still alive, or even more importantly, after their death. This obligation binds us even after death because even then they don't stop being our parents. That's why we are under serious obligation to honor and help our deceased parents by offering Masses and praying for the repose of their souls. Remember that this is the only commandment given to us by God, which contains within it a promise.

But there are yet other aspects of this commandment. One of these is the obligations of parents to their children, such as educating and forming their children in the faith and instilling in them good morals. I wasn't a good example for my children in fulfilling my religious obligations, as well as the obligations of my job or as a neighbor. I didn't make an effort to pray with my children, talk to them about the faith, provide

religious symbols in the house. I didn't spend time with my children or show an interest in their personal problems. I didn't take care to ensure that they had a good education, the basic needs of life and essential recreation. I didn't make an effort to love them and treat all of my children equally. I was unjust in the way that I punished them. I spoiled my children by giving into all of their wishes. I didn't care who my children hung around with. I didn't demand from my children appropriate respect for other parents, priests, teachers, older people, for people in general. I criticized priests in front of my children. I was the cause of conflicts by sticking my nose into my children's marital lives. I didn't fulfill my obligations as a godparent.

The obligations of spouses are covered under this commandment also. I didn't try to sincerely love my spouse. I didn't care for the health of my spouse. I didn't feel a responsibility for the spiritual life and salvation of my spouse. I kept secrets about important matters from my spouse. I made life difficult by being in a bad mood, capricious, angry or other such things. I spoke about problems that we are having in our marriage with others that have no need to know them. Our home isn't a good example of Christian life. We limited the number of children that we had just for our own convenience.

Lastly, under this commandment we find obligations to our country and society. I didn't sincerely seek the good of my country, such as by means of the people for whom I voted in elections. I didn't fulfill my obligations at work well. I wasn't a good co-worker. I was a bad example at work by swearing, speaking vulgar, drinking on the job or gossiping. I looked the other way when something was wrong just so that I wouldn't be bothered. I acted like a slave driver to those working under me. I didn't pay a just wage.

*The Fifth Commandment—You shall not kill.*

By this, the Church defines that it is gravely sinful to directly and intentionally kill an innocent human being. This includes abortion, euthanasia and suicide, being party to an abortion, encouraging or forcing someone to have an abortion, using abortifacients.

But take note of the precise wording the Church uses: “direct intentional killing” of an “innocent” human being. That’s why the killing of another that happens as a result of self-defense, as well as legitimate defense of one’s family or country during war is not an infraction of this commandment. And although its use should now be rare, capital punishment is not condemned by the Church because the person being executed is not “innocent” and by virtue of a serious crime has already forfeited his personal rights.

Physical, psychological or moral harm inflicted on oneself or another also falls under this commandment. For instance: I wished that I or someone else was dead. I beat up or injured someone. I did or am doing something to harm my health or life, such as overeating, smoking, drinking, overworking or not getting enough rest. I harbored hatred or ill will toward those near me. I drove while under the influence of alcohol. I ignored the rules of safety on the road or at work. I scandalized others by my behavior. I took unnecessary risks that could have posed a danger of physical harm to myself or others.

Showing respect for one’s health or the health of others also falls under this commandment. I intentionally did something that caused me physical, psychological or moral suffering. I don’t take care of my own intellectual, moral, religious, physical or psychological growth. I hang around with bad company. I haven’t shown respect for my own bodily integrity by practicing self mutilation: tattoos, body piercing, sterilization or other such things.

Respect for the dignity of others falls under this commandment. I despised someone. I made fun of someone. I didn't pray for my enemies and persecutors. I didn't forgive someone in my heart. I didn't try to save someone from danger or denied him help. I didn't control my anger. I took advantage of someone. I destroyed friendships. I didn't show respect for the dead.

And by extension we are obligated to respect God's creation, which He gave to us for our use but not misuse. I didn't treat the natural environment as a work of God. I purposefully caused damage to the environment. I tortured animals.

*The Sixth Commandment—You shall not commit adultery, and  
The Ninth Commandment—You shall not covet your neighbor's wife.*

I didn't show appropriate respect for the body and its reproductive powers. I desired to see immodest things. I didn't practice prudent modesty in dress or action. I didn't try to learn about Natural Family Planning. I didn't respect my spouse at those times when he or she was not able to have relations. I didn't educate my children in these matters as they were growing up. I watched someone else having intimate relations. I put off having children for unjustified or selfish reasons.

Because they violate the sacred power of procreation God has place within our bodies many of the sins under this commandment by their very nature are objectively grave. I took part in indecent conversations. I lusted after another person in my heart. I viewed pornography. I consciously aroused myself to a sin of impurity through books, films, plays or fantasizing. I showed indecent books, film, pictures, etc. to others. I committed a sin of impurity with myself or another—adultery, fornication, masturbation, prostitution, rape, incest, sodomy, homosexual acts or other forms of unnatural sex. I seduced someone. I sexually abused children. I abused my marital rights by using

contraceptives or abortifacients. I exposed myself in order to arouse others. I had marital relations in a state of drunkenness. I took steps to get a divorce. I actually got a divorce. I married again after getting a divorce.

Every sin committed against the sixth and ninth commandments in the presence of another person, especially a child, is in addition, a serious sin of scandal.

*The Seventh Commandment—You shall not steal, and  
The Tenth Commandment—You shall not covet your neighbor's goods.*

I stole something that didn't belong to me—either personal property or common property. I stole the fruits of someone else's work. I kept something that I found or borrowed. I didn't pay back a debt in the specified term or at all. I sold or bought something that was stolen. I gave or took a bribe or was involved in some sort of corruption. I damaged someone else's property. I cheated someone. I was greedy, envious or coveted someone else's property. I didn't make reparation for something stolen, either before or after Confession. I benefited myself at someone else's cost. I didn't give adequate wages for work done. I was too attached to material goods. I wasn't thrifty with my money, yet was stingy with those in need. I wasted my own talents and in so doing, others' time (such as when a teacher conducts a class without preparing for it). I wasted other people's time for no reason. I stole someone else's time by telling them to wait for me. I made use of time or things at work for my own personal benefit. I conducted transactions dishonestly. I caused harm by my own laziness, tardiness, not being on time or not keeping to agreed conditions. I broke promises or contracts that I made with others. I didn't care for the common goods of all.

Remember that reparation must always be made for anything stolen or for any harm done to another's goods before confession or as soon as possible afterwards. If not, then it will be a sacrilegious confession.

*The Eighth Commandment—You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.*

A lie is deliberately speaking a falsehood with the intention of deceiving. In itself lying is usually venial but it can be mortal when it does grave injury to another by violating the virtues of justice and charity. Therefore, each one of us should ask ourselves: Did I give false witness or perjure, falsify documents or forge someone's signature? Did I habitually lie.

This commandment regulates the respect that we are obliged to have for the reputation of others. I gossiped. I am guilty of rash judgment. I spoke without just cause about the sins or faults of others. This is called the sin of detraction. I said harmful things about others that weren't true. This is called the sin of calumny. Everyone has a right to his or her good reputation. So, damaging it in any way in the eyes of others, even if the information is true, is a form of theft—theft of their reputation to which you have no right. These sins are some of the most frequently committed sins and depending on the degree of damage that it inflicts and the person against whom it is committed, can be grave.

I revealed professional information that should have been kept in confidentiality—especially relevant for doctors, nurses and lawyers. I irresponsibly exaggerated. I was hypocritical to others. I didn't make reparation for the damage I caused by lying. I didn't keep a secret that someone asked me to keep. I didn't keep my word or promises. I sued someone without just cause. I supported something that was

untrue, perhaps for my own benefit. I was nose-y; I eavesdropped; I was a “peeping Tom.” I put the blame for something I did on someone else. I said ridiculous and stupid things without thinking. I forced someone to accept points of view that were at odds with his conscience. I engaged in boasting, flattery, adulation. It’s even worse if it was meant to encourage others in sinful behavior. I made fun of someone or maliciously caricatured them.

Today, St. Paul told us: “be sure of this: no one given to fornication, impurity or dishonesty about money, which is as bad as idolatry, has any stake in the kingdom of Christ and of God. . . . Those are the vices that bring down God’s anger on men who live in unbelief.” Those are pretty strong words and it would behoove us to heed them.

And so. End of Part II. In two weeks, we will cover the Precepts of the Church, the Seven Deadly Sins, sins that expose others to sin, sins against the Holy Spirit, as well as some other important considerations for Confession.

7 March 2010  
St. Peter’s in Volo (12:15 p.m.)  
14 March 2010 (6:00 p.m., 8:00 & 9:30 a.m.)

Hom-ExaminII