

## Lesson 2

# THE LORD OUR GOD



Once, Jesus was teaching the people in the temple of Jerusalem. Many listened to Him. Some asked Jesus certain questions. Jesus replied them. Then a lawyer came and asked Jesus: “Which Commandment is the first of all?” Jesus answered: “The first is, Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God, the Lord is one; you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind and with all your strength.” (Mk 12:29-30).

## The First Commandment

The Israelites suffered a lot under the long Egyptian captivity. It is the Lord God who liberated them. He revealed to them that He is God. God is the Creator and Preserver of the universe and all the creatures. God has authority over everything.

We must know and adore God. He is the Lord God of our forefathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. The first Commandment, God gave to the people of Israel, whom He chose and nourished specially, was this: “I am the LORD, Your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery; you shall have no other Gods before me” (Exodus 20:2-3).

## Sins Against the First Commandment

We must believe in one God alone. The central message of this Commandment is that we should not worship false Gods and idols. Those who do not accept this all-powerful, loving God and do not trust in His divine providence, violate this Commandment.

### Atheism

Atheism is the act of denying or rejecting the existence of God. This is a sin against the first Commandment and faith in God.

### Idolatry

Idolatry is worshiping persons or creatures instead of God, considering them as God. When we give the prime place, which God alone deserves, to any person or thing, we are worshiping idols. Excessive desire for wealth, prestige, position, comforts and conveniences also may turn to be idol worship. Obsession with or excessively passionate to persons and cinema stars or sport stars also come in this line.

### Sorcery

Sorcery, witchcraft, black magic etc. are those acts intended to destroy others or to attain worldly gains by depending on evil powers. This is a great evil done against God, who is the fullness of every goodness.

### Superstition

Superstition is the belief in these things which do not go along with the true faith and which do not have real basis. It is evil to accept such false beliefs. If we try to arrange our lives based on such ungodly, false symptoms and signs against true faith, we are in superstition. Making of birth star noting, believing in omens, consulting horoscope and idolatry come under this. Things like palmistry, going after astrologers, consulting certain birds etc. are also sins against the first Commandment.

## **Blasphemy or Sacrilege**

Blasphemy or Sacrilege is the abusive, contemptuous and irreverent acts against God and the persons, places and objects consecrated to God. Celebrating and receiving the sacraments unworthily is blasphemy or sacrilege. Condemnation or desecration of person, place or object dedicated to God is also sacrilegious sin.

## **Devil Worship and Spiritism**

Devil worship is worshipping Satan by mocking God, saints and holy objects, doing all kinds of evil deeds. Spiritism is the act of communicating with the dead by conjuring them up by magic and sorcery. This is being done with the hope of getting material benefits. These are very grave sins against the first Commandment.

The above mentioned acts obstructs us from loving and worshipping God whole heartedly. That is why they become grave sins. We can fully observe the first Commandment only when we accept God as the Lord and Master of our life.

## **Divine Virtues**

It is God's will that we live with true faith, hope and love in God. He revealed Himself with this purpose. Faith, Hope and Love-the divine virtues -are the basis of Christian life. They are the gifts of God.

### **Faith**

Faith is the total surrender and response of man to God who reveals Himself. God is our Creator and Protector. We must know Him, love Him and live in unity with Him. Faith is the divine virtue that helps us to lead a holy Christian life.

### **Hope**

Faith leads us to hope. Hope is the firm conviction that the Almighty, Merciful and Ever Faithful God, who is faithful to His promises will give us the grace and blessings needed for our life. It is also a confidence that God will prepare the way to enable us to live like the children of God and help us to attain eternal salvation. Hope gives us the realization that God is protecting us always and every where. Despair is a sin against hope.

## Love

Love is the virtue that enables us to love God above everything else and to love others as we love ourselves. God is love and He loves us. **We are obliged to love God in response to this love. We must love Him with our whole heart.**

### **Worship of God: Our Duty**

God alone deserves worship. It is our duty to worship God. Prayer and worship is an expression of our faith. **We must offer worship, praise and thanks to the Lord our God. The first Commandment expects of us, creatures, to worship God our Creator.** The Holy Mass or Eucharist and the other liturgical celebration help us to do this.

Once Satan asked Jesus to prostrate before him and worship him. Then Jesus said to him: **“Away with you, Satan! for, it is written, Worship the Lord your God and serve only him”** (Mt 4:8-10). **Through this, Jesus teaches us the importance of worshipping God. We must overcome the temptations to worship any other object other than God. Then only we will be able to keep the first Commandment.**

### **Veneration of the Saints**

We must worship only God. **But in churches and houses, we keep the pictures or statues of saints. Its purpose is not to worship them but to revere and respect them. It will help us to remember their holy lives, to imitate their example and to seek their intercession.** They lived on this earth, led good Christian lives and became models for us. They can intercede for us since they lived according to the will of God and attained heaven. Hence veneration of saints does not become idol worship or violation of the first Commandment.

**Through the first Commandment God ask us to recognize and accept God as our Lord, the creator and protector, with humble hearts, worship Him with our whole heart, love Him with all our strength, give Him first place throughout our lives.** This Commandment which God gave to the Israelites in the Old Testament was properly interpreted by Jesus in the New Testament. When we live it in true sense, we will become true Christians.

## **Let us Pray**

O Lord, our God, help us to proclaim  
always that you are our God and our Lord.

## **Read the Word of God and Narrate**

Dan 3: 1-30.

## **Word of God for our Guidance**

“You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart,  
and with all your soul, and with all your mind,  
and with all your strength”  
(Mk. 12:30).

## **Let us Do**

By-heart the prayers of faith, hope and love.

## **Act of Faith**

O my God, I firmly believe that you are one God in three divine persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. I believe that your divine Son became man and died for our sins and that he will come to judge the living and the dead. I believe these and all the truths which the Holy Catholic Church teaches because you revealed them, who are eternal truth and wisdom, who can neither deceive nor be deceived. In this faith I intend to live and die. **Amen.**

## **Act of Hope**

O my God, relying on your infinite goodness and promises, I hope to obtain pardon of my sins, the help of your grace and the life everlasting through the merits of Jesus Christ my Lord and redeemer. In this hope I intend to live and die. **Amen.**

## **Act of Love**

O my God, I love you above all things, with my whole heart and soul because you are all good and worthy of my love. I love my neighbour as myself for the love of you. I forgive all who have injured me and I ask pardon of all whom I have injured. In this love I intend to live and die. **Amen.**

### **My Resolution**

I will worship God by my active participation in the Holy Qurbana.

### **Find out the Answer**

1. What is the essence of the first Commandment?
2. What is idolatry ?
3. What are the sins against the first Commandment?
4. What are the divine virtues?
5. Veneration of saints does not become idol worship, Why?