

We are in the third part of the Compendium of the Catholic Church, entitled Life in Christ. We are looking at the section on the Ten Commandments, specifically the First Commandment. Here are this week's three questions with the catechism's answer and my commentary.

What is the meaning of the words of our Lord: “Adore the Lord your God and worship Him alone” (Matthew 4:10)?

These words mean to adore God as the Lord of everything that exists; to render to him the individual and community worship which is his due; to pray to him with sentiments of praise, of thanks, and of supplication; to offer him sacrifices, above all the spiritual sacrifice of one's own life, united with the perfect sacrifice of Christ; and to keep the promises and vows made to him.

Commentary: To adore God is to acknowledge the existence of God and to put our faith in him and in what he has revealed. To put our faith in God is to respond to his invitation to enter into a personal love relationship with him, which is expressed both privately and publicly, alone and with others. This love relationship elicits from us acts of praise, thanksgiving, and self-donation to God, through which we demonstrate our personal loyalty to him.

In what way does a person exercise his or her proper right to worship God in truth and in freedom?

Every person has the right and the moral duty to seek the truth, especially in what concerns God and his Church. Once the truth is known, each person has the right and moral duty to embrace it, to guard it faithfully and to render God authentic worship. At the same time, the dignity of the human person requires that in religious matters no one may be forced to act against conscience nor be restrained, within the just limits of public order, from acting in conformity with conscience, privately or publicly, alone or in association with others.

Commentary: People are made to know and to live in the truth. Therefore, the truth is both something we have a right to know and something we have an obligation to embrace once we have found it. Once we have found truth, our conscience affirms it (unless we have compromised our conscience through pride or fear or other factors) and compels us to order our lives according to its demands. Religion is the truth about God. Everyone has the right to religion and the obligation to follow its demands. No external power has the right to compel religious belief. By nature, religious faith must be freely given.

What does God prohibit by his command, “You shall not have other gods before me” (Exodus 20:2)?

This commandment forbids: *Polytheism* and *idolatry*, which divinizes creatures, power, money, or even demons. *Superstition* which is a departure from the worship due to the true God and which also expresses itself in various forms of divination, magic, sorcery and spiritism. *Irreligion* which is evidenced in tempting God by word or deed; in *sacrilege*, which profanes sacred persons or sacred things, above all the Eucharist; and in *simony*, which involves the buying or selling of spiritual things. *Atheism* which rejects the existence of God, founded often on a false conception of human autonomy. *Agnosticism* which affirms that nothing can be known about God and involves indifferentism and practical atheism.

Commentary: The Christian religion is the truth about God since it revealed by God and has its origin and end in God. Any belief or practice that contradicts the truth about God is necessarily harmful to the human person and militates against his personal relationship with God. Polytheism and idolatry attribute to creatures what alone belongs to the Creator. Superstition is the human attempt to usurp God's power and freedom and claim them for one's own. Irreligion is contempt for God. It expresses itself in sacrilege, which is contempt for the things of God, and simony, which attempts to use the things of God for selfish gain rather than for the good of others. Atheism denies the fundamental truth about God, namely, his existence and his love for all his creatures. Agnosticism denies the possibility of a personal relationship with God by denying we can know anything about him.