

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 Fourth Commandment. Here are this week's three questions with the catechism's answer and my commentary.

### **What does the fourth commandment require?**

**It commands us to honor and respect our parents and those whom God, for our good, has vested with his authority.**

Commentary: God has so ordered nature that every human person has a biological father and mother. That biological reality creates fundamental moral obligations between parents and their offspring. A person's biological father has the moral obligation to provide for his child by means of establishing with him or her a permanent, caring relationship. The same hold true for a person's biological mother. Children in turn are to honor the authority God has given to their parents (and those to whom the parents have delegated that authority, e.g., teachers, grandparents and other and members of the extended family, and other adult guardians) to shepherd them to adulthood and orient them toward their divine vocation.

### **What is the nature of the family in the plan of God?**

**A man and a woman united in marriage form a family together with their children. God instituted the family and endowed it with its fundamental constitution. Marriage and the family are ordered to the good the spouses and to the procreation and education of children. Members of the same family establish among themselves personal relationships and primary responsibilities. In Christ the family becomes the domestic church because it is a community of faith, of hope, and of charity.**

Commentary: Strictly speaking, a family is a human reality brought into existence from the marriage covenant entered into freely by a man and a woman for the purposes of life-long mutual support and the procreation and raising of children. The core of the family is the personal love shared between husband and wife and between them and children. God intends it to be an unbreakable bond of personal love which he brings into being and sustains by his grace. The nature of the human family is mysteriously rooted in the divine family of the Blessed Trinity and in the mystical marriage between Christ and his Church.

### **What places does the family occupy in society?**

**The family is the original cell of human society and is, therefore, prior to any recognition by public authority. Family values and principles constitute the foundation of social life. Family life is an initiation into the life of society.**

Commentary: The human bond between husband and wife and parents and children is the irreplaceable building block of all human society, including the Church. Therefore, it is a foremost responsibility of both of Church and State to promote and safeguard the bonds of family life and oppose all that undermines the welfare of the family.