

## 1 – Introduction

Jesus, when teaching people, didn't erase the ten commandments, but gave us a deeper understanding of them. He thought us to understand them through his own life, and his death and resurrection.

One commandment is especially directed to parents and their children: *Honour your father and your mother so that you may live long in the land that Yahweh your God is giving you* (Ex 20,12). Through this catechesis we ask ourselves; how can we understand this commandment through what Jesus has done for us?



## 2 – Reading and understanding the Holy Scripture

### **A reading from the letter of St. Paul to the Ephesians (5,21-6,5).**

*6<sup>1</sup> Children, be obedient to your parents in the Lord -- that is what uprightness demands. <sup>2</sup> The first commandment that has a promise attached to it is: Honour your father and your mother, <sup>3</sup> and the promise is: so that you may have long life and prosper in the land. <sup>4</sup> And parents, never drive your children to resentment but bring them up with correction and advice inspired by the Lord.*

### 2.1–Explanation

The whole letter of St. Paul to the Ephesians focuses on Jesus Christ. Everything belongs to him. When people get married in church, before God, they invite Christ into their relationship and acknowledge him as the Lord, also over their children. Bringing children to baptism is a very direct way of showing this.

Paul wants to tell us, that because children belong first and foremost to Christ, they should grow in him, becoming more like him. He is not telling the parents what they should do to gain the love and respect of their children, but just like he spoke directly to husbands and wives a few lines before in the letter, he now speaks directly to the children. So, what is he saying?

Verse 6,1: *“Children, be obedient to your parents in the Lord -- that is what uprightness demands”*. The key words here are “in the Lord”, which also can mean “because of who you are in Christ”. Jesus gave his life for you, for all of us, and lives in us. He wants us to teach us to be compassionate, forgiving and caring. And it all starts with those nearest to us. Obedience means to listen and to obey. This is how we can learn to be compassionate and caring.

Verse 6,3: *“The promise is: so that you may have long life and prosper in the land”*. If the relationship between parents and children is tough, it can be very hard for the parents. But the reason for being obedient in the Lord, is not to please our parents. It’s more important for your own sake, because it helps you to grow as a person. That is what a long and prosper life is all about: To be the best person you can be, and for that you need Christ’s help.

## 2.2–Summary and practice



How does it help us to be obedient? It helps us to be better listeners and to understand other viewpoints. Most importantly, it helps us to understand that everything is not about us. Sometimes we must do things we find boring, or even don’t like, because of the good of others. That is how we learn to love as Christ did.

## 3 – Theological and Spiritual Teaching

Christ’s love for us is unconditional. He doesn’t need any special reason to love us. We don’t even have to do anything for Him to love us. But there are of course a whole lot of reasons for us to love Him. He created us, he saved us etc.

We can somehow say the same things about our relationship with our parents. They don’t need any special reason to love us. We are their children, that’s enough! We don’t have to do anything to make them love us. But there’s a whole bunch of reasons for us to love them. The Church points out the most important thing:

*Children should be grateful to their parents in the first place because they received their life from the love of their parents. This gratitude establishes a lifelong relationship of love, respect, responsibility, and obedience, rightly understood. (YOUCAT, 371)*

## 4 – Sharing and prayer

Ask yourselves how you can support and care for each other in daily life.

Is there anything in our daily routines that can be better?

Is there anything you can or should share from your personal life in order to understand each other better?

Parents ask their children to pray for them, both at the end of this family catechesis and every day:

*Almighty God, you gave us the commandment to honour our father and mother. In your loving kindness hear my prayer for my parents. Give them long lives and keep them well in body and spirit. Bless their labours; keep them always in your care. Bless them generously for their loving care for me. Grant that, through your grace, I may always be their support and comfort, and that, after our life together on earth, we may experience the joy of praising you together forever. Amen.*

