**Lent 3 B**  **Lectionary Catechesis**

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 **Guardian Angels Parish in Mead, CO**

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| The Cross is the wisdom of God, and engaging is this command to take up one’s cross creates the disciple, conformed to the image of Christ through faithfulness to God’s commands. Lent purifies our bodies, hearts, minds, and souls, the temple of the Holy Spirit, through grace that supports works of mercy, creating a just and orderly human society. On pages 496-497 of the CCC the commandments are compared side by side with the Exodus, Deuteronomy, and Catechetical versions paralleled.  |

**FIRST READING: Exodus 20, 1-17 The Ten Commandments**

There are two versions of the ten commandments in the Bible, the other being at Deuteronomy 5, 6-21. There are some differences between the two versions; in any case neither of these lengthier statements is what we’ve memorized a la St. Augustine. Here each of the first four commandment are given a rationale, grounded in an historical experience. The commandments form the whole third quarter of the Catechism which outlines the moral life of the Christian. There is a citation for each one, but remember that each commandment is laid out and explicated over the course of a whole section in great detail.

**Vss. 1-17: CCC 2056** The Commandments are sometimes called the Decalogue, which means “ten words.”

**Vss. 2-5: CCC 2083** Jesus sums up these commandments in love of God and neighbor as oneself.

**Vs. 2: CCC 2061** The 1st commandment springs from the ultimate saving act of God in the Exodus.

**Vs. 7: CCC 2141** The veneration of sacred images is not contrary to the 1st Commandment because it is not worship, but an aide to worship.

**Vs. 11: CCC 2169** The Sabbath Day is blessed and a blessing because it calls us back to creation.

**Vs. 12: CCC 2196, 2200, 2214** First the CCC teaches us the classical *Shema Israel* prayer. CCC2200 supports the peace and justice of family life, proper to an orderly society, without which both individuals and families are harmed and shattered. Children have a natural affection for their parents that is from the theology of creation.

**Vs. 14: CCC 2330** “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.” Mattnew 5, 9

**Vs. 15: CCC 2400** This lists the grave offenses against the dignity of marriage.

**Vs. 16: CCC 2463, 2504** We steal from the poor when we fail to hear their cry to heaven but rather hoard for ourselves. This commandment is necessary for a just society to live in harmony.

**Vs. 17: CCC 1456, 2513, 2533** Sins against the last two commandments can especially damage community, so they are important to confess as much as missing Mass on Sunday and the like. No where does the text say that any of the ten are more important than the other; the text does not number them even. The CCC notes that the fine arts keep this commandment by showing the beauty of our neighbor about whom we may be tempted to disparage. Purity of heart about one’s neighbor creates modesty.

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| **KNOW YOUR****FAITH** | See who in the discussion group can recite all the ten commandments from memory.Draw an explicit connection between commandments and covenant community. |
| **LIVE YOUR****FAITH** | Which commandments most challenge your life?How do you or your family keep the Sabbath holy? Is play holy? |
| **SHARE YOUR FAITH** | Which commandments are our society good at keeping?In this year of the Synod on the Family, share your reflections on marital and family life. |
| **WORSHIP** | Why is it not enough to take the commandments literally at face value?Why do commandments and covenant go hand in hand in our Sunday worship? |

  **First Reading**

**RESPONSORIAL: Psalm 19, 8. 9. 10. 11**

The psalmist revels in the perfection of God’s law. Beginning with the order of the natural world and using nuptial imagery, even compared to gold and honey, the psalmist completes the list with the wry observation that by this divine law, humans are warned. The final three verses are a petition for purification, so that the faithful servant is found worthy. Vs. 11b is why the rabbis taught little Jewish children the Hebrew alphabet by tracing the letter on a plate with honey as the ink; then the child would learn the letter by consuming it literally licking the plate.

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| **KNOW YOUR****FAITH** | Big question: what does the Church mean by the natural law?Over and beyond the commandments of the first reading, there are 613 commandments according to the rabbis. Where are these in the Bible? Do we follow them? |
| **LIVE YOUR****FAITH** | How do God’s commandments “refresh your soul” and “rejoice your heart”?What is your reward for keeping God’s covenant and commandments? |
| **SHARE YOUR FAITH** | Discuss the Ten Commandments-on-the-court-house-lawn dilemma in our culture.What is the wisdom you take away to share about God’s commandment? |
| **WORSHIP** | Why does the psalmist connect God’s commandment with the order of the natural created universe?Sunday worship fulfills only part of the Sabbath Commandment. What is the other part?And how do you do this other part? |

 **Responsorial Psalm**

**SECOND READING: I Corinthians 1, 22-25**

After one of Paul’s typically elaborate greetings, he gets right to the point and addresses the divisions within the community at Corinth. These divisions are created because of the rivalries of the community’s leaders, each jostling for followers and self-importance by the use of their human eloquence. Paul re-directs their attention to the wisdom of God: the Cross. He calls the Cross “a stumbling block”, in Greek, “*skandalon*”, which in English is “scandal.” In the classical world the Greeks were the masters of philosophy, precise thought, and knowledge. Pure contemplation of being led Plato the One, the Good, and the Beautiful. It shocked them to think that it was the Cross, a Roman instrument of capital punishment. Lent calls upon us to understand how the Cross can give us wisdom and lead us to God.

**Vss. 24-25: CCC 272** The power and wisdom of God are often not the way we would have things from our human perspective. So, the existence of suffering and evil remain fundamentally a mystery for us. Often suffering can test the character and the faith of a person. The person comes to an awesome decisiveness about their faith through trials. God shows power in the resurrection which can only come after the Cross.

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| **KNOW YOUR****FAITH** | What is the wisdom of God?Why is the Cross a stumbling block for our culture today? |
| **LIVE YOUR****FAITH** | What part of the concept of the Cross challenges you most this Lent?What does the wisdom of the God in the Cross mean for you personally? |
| **SHARE YOUR FAITH** | We are very proud of our human strength. How does this get in the way of the good news of Jesus Christ for us?Notice in the reading that Paul says, “”Jews and Greeks alike”, which divisions caused some of the problems in Corinth. How can we overcome our bigotries and prejudices this Lent?  |
| **WORSHIP** | Catholics place an image of the body of Christ (called the *corpus*) on their crosses, long distinguishing the Catholic and Protestant iconography. Why do we do this?Crosses began to appear as the central piece of interior architecture in the late 1700’s. Even in the Vatican, the cross is a very small piece on the altar. Research what was on the wall of the apse before that and discuss what that would have been understood to complete the Christian kerygma.  |

 **Second Reading**

**GOSPEL: John 2, 13-25 Purification of the Temple and Predicting the Resurrection**

These citations from the CCC teach about the relationship of Jesus to the Jerusalem Temple in the Creed. Unlike the synoptic gospels, John arranges for the purification of the Temple to take place at the beginning of the public ministry of Jesus, who in his public ministry will be teaching about ritual purity and right relationship with the Father. The reading falls into three parts: the purification of the Temple, the ensuing dialogue with the people, and finally a summary statement about the acceptance of his preaching and healing. The dialogue concludes with a profession of the disciples’ faith, which is arguably the point for our Lenten journey. There is also the final note about the painful reality of human nature,; well known by Jesus, that we must all face whether we like it or not, because God really does know us

**Vss. 13-14: CCC 583** Throughout Jesus’ life and ministry, the Temple is visited and honored by Jesus. Pilgrimage there shapes the narrative of the gospels.

**Vss. 16-17: CCC 584** Jesus journeyed to the Temple as most special site to be with God, and so he was angered that its courts were filled with the material things of this world. After the resurrection and ascension the apostolic community continues to be found in the Temple.

**Vss. 18-22: CCC 586** Even Jesus paid the Temple tax. He identified himself with the Temple and made himself the new body in and through which we encounter God.

**Vs. 18: CCC 575** Many of Jesus’ words and actions are a “sign of contradiction”. (Luke 2, 34)

**Vss. 19-22: CCC 994** Just as Jesus embodies the Temple, which he purifies, so too he embodies in himself the resurrection.

**Vs. 21: CCC 586** Cf. above.

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| **KNOW YOUR****FAITH** | How do we know that the body will participate in the resurrection of the dead? Discuss St. Paul’s related theology that the body is the temple of the Holy Spirit. What do you know about the theology of the Body?  |
| **LIVE YOUR****FAITH** | What role does your physical parish church play in your faith life?How is Jesus a “sign of contradiction” for you after you’ve read this story?  |
| **SHARE YOUR FAITH** | Does zeal for God’s house consume you in the public forum? Explain in terms of the new evangelization.In what way do you understand that we all share in the human nature which Jesus knows so well? |
| **WORSHIP** | Why do some people connect this story with our contemporary practice of tables and what not before and after Mass selling things at the church entrance?How ought church architecture reflect the Temple architecture? Cf. I Kings 6-7 |

 **Gospel**

**Next Sunday: Lent 4 B: II Chronicles 36, 14-16. 19-23; Psalm 137; Ephesians 2, 4-10; John 3, 14-21**