

## *14th Week Ordinary Time*

<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Exodus 20, 1-17</u></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>VII. You shall not steal</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Deuteronomy 5, 6-21</u></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>VII. You shall not steal</b></p>
--	--

The need for the Seventh Commandment presumes the need for private property. So, this four word commandment has propelled us into a world of philosophy and politics. Both John Locke and Thomas Jefferson saw a need for civil laws to protect the rights and *property* of citizens. How does private property relate to the common good? How do we acquire private property? Is the massive accumulation of private property not only legal but also holy? The Seventh Commandment is a law from God that protects private property. The Bible and Church teachings address all the above questions. Likewise social sciences, the many philosophies about human nature, political science, and the numerous discussions concerning the rights of nations attempt to answer these questions. Last week we ended with this quote from the Catechism of the Catholic Church: “The promotion of the common good requires respect for the right to private property.” (See §2403) “The ownership of any property makes the holder a steward of Providence, with the task of making any property fruitful and communicating the benefits of any property to others, first of all one’s own family.” (See §2404) “Respect for human dignity requires the practice of the virtue of Temperance, so as to moderate attachment to this world’s goods.” (See § 2407) For the Church, the ideas of respect for human dignity, the existence of a God of Providence, and moderation in forming attachments to the goods [properties] of our world are gravely important in determining the acquisition, use, and protection of private property. The Catechism teaches, “The precept of detachment from riches is obligatory for entrance into the Kingdom of heaven.” (See §2544) The section of the Catechism that explains the Seventh Commandment has a sub-section titled Love For The Poor. “God blesses those who come to the aid of the poor...” (See §2443) “...and God rebukes those who turn away from the poor.” (See §2443) The concept of moderate attachment has two extremes: 1) I give away everything to the poor and am unable to fulfill any other obligations I may have toward the remainder of society, and 2) I worked hard to own my things and lazy people should never benefit from my hard work. This four word Commandment will tread upon many misconceptions we may have about “This is mine.”