

Ascension Sunday

Exodus 20, 1-17 VII. You shall not steal	Deuteronomy 5, 6-21 VII. You shall not steal
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A great and important discovery we made so far shows that we can steal from the poor simply by keeping what seems to be ours. The Scriptures make clear that God expects us to help each other. The poor can help the rich to avoid selfishness when the poor accept the charity of the rich. The Beatitude, “Blessed are the merciful for they will be shown mercy”, (Mt 5, 7) gives us an indication of how our use of possessions are tied to our need for forgiveness of our sins. Today we begin our look at the Catechism. The Seventh Commandment teachings are found in sections 2401 to 2463. This number of sections may not be as big as the number of sections that dealt with our last two commandments, but these teachings are extremely interesting and surprising. The major subtitles are: I. The Universal Destination and The Private Ownership of Goods, II. Respect for Persons and Their Goods, III. The Social Doctrine of The Church, IV. Economic Activity and Social Justice, V. Justice and Solidarity Among Nations, and VI. Love For The Poor. Every title will remind us of our need to properly use the possessions that we call ‘ours’! Here is the opening line to the teachings on the Seventh Commandment: “The seventh commandment forbids unjustly taking or keeping the goods of one’s neighbor.” This statement includes all the ideas we have been discussing thus far. For example, if there is an unjust taking of goods can there be a just taking of goods? The answer is “Yes”! Can the goods of one’s neighbor be actually in your possession because you purchased them or earned them? The answer is “Yes”! Likewise the typical understanding of stealing is also included in this statement. There is much for thought here. We will end today’s discussion with one more statement from the opening section: “The Seventh Commandment commands justice and charity in the care of earthly goods and the fruits of men’s labor.”