

Fifth Sunday - Ordinary Time

Exodus 20: 1 - 17	Deuteronomy 5: 6 - 21
VI. You shall not commit adultery	VI. You shall not commit adultery

Today we shall see the many areas of life disordered by the sin of adultery. Recall that adultery disrupts unity in several ways. We noted the large number of sections of the Catechism of the Catholic Church devoted to the Sixth Commandment: 2331-2400. There are four subtitles: **I** *Male And Female He Created Them*, (2331 – 2336) **II** *The Vocation to Chastity*, (2337 – 2359) **III** *The Love of Husband And Wife*, (2360 – 2379), and **IV** *Offenses Against The Dignity of Marriage* (2380 – 2391). The first sub-section focuses on the image of God. From our study of the Trinity we learn that one God can be three Persons through a special form of unity. The Book of Genesis is clear that marriage is an image of God both in the ability to create life and to form unity. The Catholic Church rightly teaches that new life should be the result of unity. In other words, a man and woman marry because they love each other. A man and woman would not marry properly if the primary reason is a child conceived before marriage. Adultery destroys the image of God. Thus the sin of the Sixth Commandment is so serious. Even lustful thoughts begin with disregard for the image of God in us. The Church recognizes the differences in man and woman as differences that complement each other. The differences do not oppose each other but fulfill each other. “Physical, moral, and spiritual *difference* and *complementarity* are oriented toward the goods of marriage and the flourishing of family life. The harmony of the couple and the harmony of society depends in part on the way in which complementarity, needs, and mutual support between the sexes are lived out.” (See §2333) That last statement sounds like a lot of confusing language! First the Church tells us that a man and woman differ in more ways than gender. While this fact is obvious to our experiences of life, the lust for pleasure makes us ignore the importance of the differences that go beyond physical gender. The different approaches to morality complement each other like two pieces of a jigsaw puzzle. The ways of administering discipline to children should be different between husband and wife and should support each other. The approaches to spirituality, likewise, need to be different but mutually supportive. Failure to accept the differences of all aspects of life and failure to accept the need for the differences to work together can lead to the sin of adultery. Next week we will begin with a look at the image of God and the single life.