

Fourth Sunday Ordinary Time

<u>Exodus 20, 1-17</u>	<u>Deuteronomy 5, 6-21</u>
<i>IV. Honor your father and your mother</i>	<i>IV. Honor your father and your mother as the Lord, your God, has commanded you,</i>
That you may have a long life	That you may have a long life and prosperity
In the land which the Lord, your God, is giving you.	In the land which the Lord, your God, is giving you.

Today, the Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time, we begin our study of the Fourth Commandment. A quick visual look tells us that the Fourth Commandment is just about the same in both books of the Bible. This commandment is referenced several times in the New Testament. We will examine those references as we move forward. Saint Paul reminds us: “This is the first commandment with a promise...” (See Eph6, 2) Then Saint Paul quotes the promise of a long life on the land and the promise of prosperity. The Fourth Commandment seems simple enough and almost self-explanatory. Much can be learned, however, by getting into a hot air balloon and taking in a much broader view. As we begin to ascend we will first notice that there are three commandments before this Fourth Commandment and six more following this commandment. Saint John Paul II notice this same positioning of the Fourth Commandment. In his Letter to Families he explores this ordering of the Ten Commandments. The first three deal with our relationship with God. These three are not the first commandments by accident. The Lord’s Prayer begins with seeking honor for the name, kingdom, and will of our Father in heaven. The last six commandments concern our love of neighbor. Now Saint John Paul II recognized that our parents are not our neighbors nor are they God. “Honor your father and your mother....This commandment comes after the three basic precepts which concern the relation...with God. That the Fourth Commandment is placed in this particular context is significant.” (See §15 of his Letter) The Book of Deuteronomy contains a very important parallel: “You must keep the commandments of the Lord...that you and your children after you may prosper, and that you may have long life on the Land which the Lord, your God, is giving you forever.” (See Dt 4:40)