

Third Sunday of Lent

<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</i> as the Lord, your God, has commanded you,
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.

Honor is an amazing idea. Last week we realized that we cannot just make simple assumptions about honor. For example, parents cannot assume that the Fourth Commandment requires children to obey them. Marriage does not make a husband the owner of a wife. Likewise, being a parent does not automatically propel a person into being a dictator. So far, we have learned from Saint John Paul II that the Catholic Church first understands honor in the normal sense of ‘recognition’. Then, he went on to teach us that honor leads to unity. This unity begins as a spiritual quest through prayer; for true unity exists only in the love of God. Our Church teaches that honor, therefore, does require every child to pray for his or her parents. The Second Vatican Council Constitution on the Church in the Modern World teaches: “As living members of the family, children contribute in their own way to making their parents holy...They [the children] will stand by them [the parents] as children should when hardships overtake their parents and when old age brings its loneliness.” This statement describes honor beautifully. Again, the same document teaches, “Children contribute very substantially to the welfare of their parents.” Honor, according to Saint John Paul II, is the source of being human. In his Letter to Families, 02 February 1994, he writes, “All human rights are ultimately ineffective if they lack the command to honor....The life of nations is based on the Fourth Commandment.” He continues, “The affirmation of the person is in great measure to be referred back to the Fourth Commandment.” Saint John Paul II ends this section on the Fourth Commandment by stating that the honoring of father and mother comes as a command from God and, therefore, is given, “as a task to be carried out with the help of divine grace.” Honor is a responsibility. Obedience is due to parents who first love God!