

In his homily last week, Deacon Mark had a great point

As humans, we have a tendency to want to measure everything

We even want to measure things that cannot be measured

Like a little child

I love you this much

Arms wide open

Meaning it simply is not possible to love any more

But we still want to measure it

And kind of tied to this

Why is it that when something is demanded of us

It is more difficult to accomplish?

Fasting on Ash Wednesday or Good Friday

Not eating meat on Fridays during Lent

If it not required

I think most people fast somewhat during a week

We are not always at the table eating

We can go days without eating meat

So many options to eat healthy that avoid meat

Until it is demanded of us

Then it becomes a terrible sacrifice

All this is part of human nature

Something Christ knows so very well

It affects us so much that when we read the 10 Commandments

Often all we see are the laws

What we are allowed to do

Or what we are not allowed

But the 10 Commandments are so much more than that

They are written by a Father who loves us

A Father that knows what is ultimately good for us

A Father who desires us to be in his presence for all eternity

So we need to change our focus

When we see the 10 Commandments

We see the division

The first three that deal with our relationship with God

The last 7 show us how to live this relationship with each other

Beginning with family, and going outward from there

Like the 3 legged stool I spoke of on Ash Wednesday

The 10 Commandments are balanced on a threefold foundation

When we get the first three right

When our relationship with God is right

We have a proper foundation to build human relationships

I am the Lord your God

Everyone has something or someone that is the highest value

The thing or person we worship

If this is not God

One of the legs is rotted

We experience disharmony in our lives

We may claim that this is God

And I pray it is

But then, do my actions follow?

Do not take the Lord's name in vain

Words matter; speech matters

Our worship must express itself properly

Keep holy the Sabbath

Why is it that churches throughout the world

**Not just Catholic, but so many churches and synagogues are empty on
Sunday?**

Are our actions and words reflecting what we profess?

God does not need our worship

We need it

Then with a solid foundation of the first three commandments

We live them out in our lives

Beginning with our families and those closest to us

Honor your father and mother

Families are the foundation of society

When the family structure is threatened, all of society is threatened

Thou shall not kill

Most of us are not outright murderers

But we cannot deny that this affects our lives

50 million plus aborted children in our nation alone

ISIS in the Middle East

Murders in our cities

**Should it really be news that a major city goes ten days without
a murder?**

Thou shall not commit adultery

Marriage being the foundation of the family

This is an attack on society

Thou shall not steal

This is a violation that goes beyond material goods

It is a violation of our personhood and basic human rights

Taking something that does not belong to us

Bearing false witness

Again, tearing others down

Rather than building each other up

How easy for us to do this

Story of a man collecting crabs in a bucket

Getting fuller and fuller; some could reach the top

Another comes along; aren't you worried some will get out?

No, just watch them

When one starts to get close to the top

The others will grab hold and draw it back down

We laugh, but then do the same thing to our neighbors

And then coveting another's goods or their spouse

Why do we desire what another has?

Not so much because it is good in itself

But because another has it

Kids playing, we see this all the time

Boxes and pup tents; one gets set up and another wants it

Identical objects a few feet away

But they need that one

And this doesn't go away when we get older

It just draws us deeper

Christ did not need anyone to tell him about human nature;

He knew it well

So let's take another look at our Gospel

The Temple was where the God-fearing people went to worship

Jews and Gentiles alike

The Temple area surrounded the Temple

This is where the Gentiles could gather

Over time this was overtaken by businessmen

Selling animals for the Jews to sacrifice

Moneychangers converted foreign currency into Temple currency for taxes

**The Jews living the practice of their faith on the outside only
Presuming keeping these Temple rituals was all that was needed**

**The Temple was no longer a place of encounter with God
Cleansing of the Temple shows this Temple building would itself be replaced**

Jesus' body is the new Temple

**He is the fulfillment of everything the Temple promised
It was not a building that needed cleansing**

**It was human nature that needed cleansing
And our own human nature still needs occasional cleansing**

**We all fall to temptation and sin
We need to be cleansed so we can have that true encounter with God**

So we can live this encounter,

**This relationship with our families and neighbors
This is what we are called to do during Lent**

Giving up chocolate or the internet or television is good

Not in and of themselves

But in as much as these sacrifices cleanse our hearts and souls

Solidifying the way we live the first three commandments

Rebuilding and fortifying our relationship with a loving Father

Allowing us to live this relationship among our families

Our friends and neighbors

Even among strangers

Opening our vision to a new reading of the 10 Commandments

Not so much as a reading of laws

But a reading of love

Offering a path to true happiness

A life of harmony in this world

Eternal life in the next