

**FATHER MARK SCHULTE**  
**HOMILY**  
**FIFTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME**  
**July 13, 2025**

**“Comfort Zone”**

My Brothers and Sisters, the ten commandments are often referred to as “the law” and were given by God to Moses on Mt. Sinai. They were given in what is expressed as a negative format for the most part. For example, the sixth commandment says, “Thou shall not commit adultery”. The fifth commandment says, “You shall not kill” and so on. The first three commandments pertain to our relationship with God while the remaining seven commandments deal with our relationship with our neighbor.

However, the lawyer in our Gospel passage summarizes all ten commandments by quoting a passage from the book of Deuteronomy (Dt 6:5, Lv 19:18), and Jesus commends him for doing so (Lk 10:25-37). The lawyer does this in what is known as positive law. It is the ten commandments expressed in a different way, as an expression of love.

“You shall love the Lord your God  
with all your heart,  
with all your soul,  
with all your strength,  
and with all your mind  
and your neighbor as yourself”.

And so once again the ten commandments can be stated as acts of love (CCC 1962, 1972). The first three commandments deal with our love for God. The remaining seven deal with our love for our neighbor. Later in the Gospel, Jesus will summarize the commandments in this way as well (Mt 22:37-40). In another place Jesus will say to his apostles, “A new commandment I give to you, “Love one another as I love you” (Jn 13:34-35).

One can recite the ten commandments, but it is not so easy living them out. We see something of this in the Gospel, especially when it comes to loving our neighbor, for we are all fraught with weaknesses and prejudices of various kinds. It is much easier to express love for family and friends than it is for a stranger. We can see this in the example Jesus gave. A man was attacked by robbers and left for dead. Two Jews, a Priest and Levite passed him by without lending a hand. It was the Samaritan, a person not likely as familiar with the mosaic law, who stopped and helped the injured man. He helped because God’s law is written on the heart (Jer 31:33). A man may not be able to recite the ten commandments but he knows intuitively the right thing to do (Dt 30:14).

The ten commandments speak of things not to do, but there are transgressions of the law of love that deal with things that we should do but fail to do. These are called sins of omission. For example, when we have the opportunity to perform some act of charity (love), but we fail to do it, it is called a sin of omission (CCC 1853). We acknowledge this during the Holy Mass when we recite the penitential rite:

- I confess to almighty God....
- That I have greatly sinned....
- In what I have done and in what I failed to do...

The Priest and Levite in the Gospel committed a sin of omission when they refused to help the injured man. Jesus said: "Whatever you do (or fail to do) to the least of my brothers you do to me" (Mt 25:40). St. Martin of Tours came upon a beggar in the cold. He tore his cloak in half and gave it to the beggar. When he did this, he saw that the beggar was actually Jesus.

God gives every person an opportunity to perform acts of charity. It is the heart of a person that will determine what they will do. Will they help or walk away? Is our heart filled with compassion? Are we generous with our time? Are we willing to encounter someone, get up close and risk being inconvenienced? Are we willing to get outside of our comfort zone and be present to someone in need? If we struggle to do this try to think of the other person as Jesus. There have been many stories about someone who has helped a stranger and the stranger turned out to be an angel.

So don't think of the ten commandments, the law of God, as being just so many things that we should avoid doing but rather think of them as opportunities to love God and our neighbor. For it is indeed the law of love.

NOTE: CCC = Catechism of the Catholic Church