

Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain.

The second Commandment commands us to reverence the holy name of the Lord, and to speak with profound respect of God and of holy things at all times. We manifest this reverence and respect by pronouncing and by invoking either the holy name of God or that of His only Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, with sentiments of piety and veneration.

Such is the precept indirectly expressed in this Commandment, its direct declaration being a prohibition. It prohibits all acts contrary to the respect which we owe to the holy name of God; such are, chiefly, blasphemy, perjury, and the violation of vows.

Blasphemy is speaking injuriously of God, discoursing or circulating writings against God. To constitute blasphemy, it is not necessary that our discourse be directly aimed at God; it suffices if it be either against the Blessed Virgin or the Saints, or against holy things for example, the Church of Jesus Christ, her Sacraments, her ministers, and whatever else has reference to His holy religion because an insult offered to God's Saints, or anything sacred, is offered to God who is the Author of these holy institutions and of all sanctity.

There are different kinds of blasphemy: (i) the blasphemy which exhausts itself in a vulgar oath, and the blasphemy of the continued discourse, or conversation in which blasphemous ideas are uttered frequently under the garb of a seductive and polished diction; (2) spoken blasphemy and written blasphemy; (3) the blasphemy of malediction and the blasphemy of ridicule or sacrilegious jesting. As blasphemies of malediction are to be classed those impious imprecations in which is invoked the vengeance of God on our own head or that of others.

Were it not, my brethren, a sorrowful reality, who could believe the possibility of blasphemy, could comprehend that man could reach that delirium of impiety, that degree of audacity, in which he dares to vomit forth outrages against his Creator? Ah! let us pray God for these wretched blasphemers, and let us beg Him in His mercy to preserve us from ever committing so heinous a sin.

We have seen that the second Commandment forbids blasphemy. Blasphemy is a heinous sin, for which every Christian ought to have the greatest horror. I do not intend here to speak of certain gross words, sounding badly and approaching blasphemy; but of blasphemies properly so called.

Such are certain expressions of malediction against God and His holy name; such are, moreover, impious discourses, either written or spoken against Jesus Christ, His Church, His ministers.

Why ought the Christian to abhor blasphemy? Because there is nothing more shocking than to curse God, and to curse Him with a tongue which has been sanctified by the body and blood of Jesus Christ in holy Communion.

Because blasphemy is the sin of the demons and of the lost in hell.

Because blasphemy is a scandal, and rapidly disseminates itself, especially among the young. (Woe to parents who blaspheme and so teach blasphemy to their children!)

Because blasphemy is a sin of pure malice, offering no inducement of profit or pleasure to him who commits it.

Because blasphemy draws down God's malediction on those who are guilty of it on the blasphemers, on the homes, the workshops, where blasphemy is tolerated.

What is the remedy for blasphemy?

1. Prayer. Pray devoutly, pray frequently, and you will not blaspheme.
2. A good confession by way of reparation for the past.
3. A firm resolution as regards the future.
4. The imposition of a penance or a penalty for each offence.
5. Curbing anger and preserving silence when vexed.
6. Avoiding improper places and bad companions.

What must we do when we hear blasphemy ?

We must at once check it if it be in our power; if not, we must petition God's pardon, and repair the injury done Him, saying : Blessed be the name of the Lord! Praised be Jesus Christ ! Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.