

Ten Commandments of a Husband and Father

(See: <http://fathersofmercy.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/11/Ten-Commandments-of-a-Husband-and-Father.pdf>)

“Take courage and be a man. Keep the mandate of the Lord, your God, following His ways and observing His statutes, commands, ordinances and decrees, that you may succeed in whatever you do.”
-1 Kings 2:2-3

I. Develop an intimate, personal relationship with Jesus, allowing Him to forgive you of your past, to talk to you, to heal you and to guide you. Then, trust the Holy Spirit in all things. Trust Him to provide everything you need, including financial help.

II. Get your priorities in order: Jesus first, your wife second, your children third, your work fourth, etc. Develop a weekly schedule, blocking out quality time for the Lord, your wife, each child and the family as a whole. A husband’s most important time during any given day is the first five minutes when he gets home from work and the love and attention he shows his wife and children at that time. Remember that your human fatherhood is rooted in the Divine Fatherhood of Almighty God (see Ephesians 3:14-15; see *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2214).

III. Realize that you are the “priest” of the home. It is your primary responsibility to oversee the TV and its influence, the Internet and its influence, as well as the books and magazines that enter into your home. You must stand firmly against all evil influences, asking constantly for God’s strength and guidance to lead your family in living a pure, holy and non-violent lifestyle. *Esto vir!* (Be a man!). A father fosters moral virtue within his home first and foremost by example. Get into the habit of blessing your children—both alone and with your wife—before they go to sleep at night or before they leave the house in the morning.

IV. Make sure you know what your children are being taught at school regarding morals and values. Speak up if objectionable things are being taught. The primary place for Christian morals and values to be taught and practiced is within the family home—your home, which you oversee. This is an awesome responsibility given both to you (as the “head” of your household) and to your wife (as the “heart” of your household). Realize that your headship is to be modeled after the headship of the wise and prudent king who loves and rules over his kingdom and its inhabitants. Discipline with love and firmness. The wise and prudent king loves all of the subjects within his kingdom and wishes to see them prosper in the fullness of beauty and truth.

V. Pray with your wife on a regular basis. Try to keep a simple, but sincere spiritual journal and share it with her, even if your entries are just short, inspirational sentences. Trust the Lord to guide, purify and sanctify your relationship with your wife. She is the “heart” of the home. Reverence her as such. Love her with the same love and affection Christ has for His Church. Remember that your sons will grow up to relate to women much in the same way

that they saw you relate to your wife. Similarly, your daughters will learn from their father what to expect from men in a relationship. Share with your wife her burdens, her sorrows and her joys. Ask the Lord for the strength to love her with the same love and purity with which He loves His Bride, the Church.

VI. Spend quality time with each child. Treat each child in a unique and personal way. The power of a father’s affirming love is tremendously overwhelming and something truly wonderful. Children need it. They require it for their full and proper development. Let each child share his or her ideas, feelings, fears and problems with you. Do everything in your power to ensure that your child can always approach you in any matter. Be sure to share periodically with your wife your insights concerning each child.

VII. Consecrate your home to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Set up a “prayer corner” within the home in the room where the family most gathers. In this room should be an “altar-table.” On this table place a Bible, a good condensed version of the *Lives of the Saints* and copy of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. On or around this table, also place images (statues, pictures or icons) of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the Immaculate Heart of Mary. Pray the Rosary or Divine Mercy Chaplet with your family after dinner. Also, be sure to foster the use of sacramentals among your family members. Sacramentals are sacred signs that make everyday events holy and prepare our hearts to receive the sacraments in a deeper way. Examples of sacramentals include the Sign of the Cross, holy water, wearing a brown scapular or religious medals, blessings, pilgrimages, processions, the Stations of the Cross, sacred art, rosaries and the veneration of relics. Stop by the church with your children to pray frequently when nearby.

VIII. Do not let sports or outside activities become more important to you or to your children than Christ and family. Sports have become a false god in America today—especially on Sundays—and we tend to overemphasize them. Spend fun time at home. Do things together as a family. This calls for creativity, imagination and frequent planning in advance.

IV. Pray that each one of your children may answer the call to the vocation that Almighty God has chosen for him or her from all eternity. Never ask your children, “What do you want to be?” Rather, ask each child, “What do you think God is calling you to be?” Help them to discern their states-in-life, whether it be singlehood, the married state or consecrated religious life. Have this discussion often with your children, especially after they reach the age of 15.

X. Go as a family to Mass each week and Confession each month. Also, go to Mass on Holy Days. You must make sure that your family’s sense of sin is never dulled. Work on tithing regularly and devotedly. Make sure Sunday is truly a day of prayer, relaxation and recreation.

Ten Commandments of a Wife and Mother

(See: <http://fathersofmercy.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/11/Ten-Commandments-of-a-Wife-and-Mother.pdf>)

“When one finds a worthy wife, her value is far beyond pearls. Her husband, entrusting his heart to her, has an unfailing prize. She brings him good and not evil, all the days of her life.”
-Proverbs 31:10-12

I. Develop an intimate, personal relationship with Jesus Christ. He is your primary love. Allow Him to move you, forgive you, speak to you, guide you, heal you and fill you. Try to keep a spiritual journal of the inspirational messages you sense from Him, even if the entries are just short, encouraging and inspirational sentences; share these with your husband.

II. Keep your priorities in order—Jesus first, your husband second, your children third, etc. The best thing you can do for your husband is to love Jesus and see Him in your husband, despite any faults and weaknesses your husband might have. The best thing you can do for your children is to let them see you love their father. Try not to work outside the home. If you do need to work outside the home, try to make sure that your work does not interfere with your primary responsibilities as a Catholic Christian *wife, mother and woman* living in the midst of the modern world. There is great dignity in the domesticity of this three-fold aspect of your one vocation. Develop a weekly schedule setting aside primary time for Jesus, for your husband, and for each child.

III. Realize that you are the “heart” of the home and that your husband is the “head” of the home. Both head and heart work together for the benefit of the whole body, which in this regard is the family. Even on a purely natural level, one’s head and heart work together for the benefit of the body: the heart pumps blood to the head, the head processes it and is able to function and work rationally. It is your primary duty and responsibility to work with your husband and support him with your love. Love is your greatest gift.

IV. Let your husband know the problems and difficulties that you and your children are experiencing in striving to live strong Christian lives amidst a secular society. Remember that Christians are called to be “*in* the world, but not *of* the world.” Work with God and your husband toward solutions. For example, TV is dangerous because of the violence and sexual promiscuity that dominate many programs today. Decide with your husband which television programs you will allow the family to watch. You and your husband must be disciplined in this regard, too. Don’t let sports, soap operas, or sitcoms become a god.

V. Pray with your husband on a regular basis. Share your insights with him. If you keep a spiritual journal, share it with him. Ask and allow the Lord to sanctify and purify your relationship with your husband. Ask the Lord for the strength to love your husband with the same love and purity He has for you and His Church.

VI. Spend quality time with each child, loving each one fully as he or she needs. There is nothing to compare with a mother’s love in a child’s life. You will intuitively know each child’s needs and problems. Treat each child in a unique and personal way. The power of a mother’s affirming love is tremendously overwhelming and something truly wonderful. Children need it. They require it for their full and proper development. Share openly with your children and allow them to be open with you. You should know their fears, worries and temptations. Pray *daily* for guidance and wisdom—both for yourself and for them. Dare to discipline with love and firmness.

VII. Support your husband in setting up a place for family devotions within your home. Encourage your family members at family devotions to place everything in God’s hands—worries, fears, doubts, difficulties and temptations. Establish a family “Book of Petitions” similar to that which is found in your parish church and which family members can freely write in. Instill in them the truth that God is really their Father and that the Blessed Virgin Mary is really their Mother. Instill in them, too, that the Holy Spirit is really present to each one of them, desiring to work actively in each one of their lives. Remind them that Jesus lives in their hearts, is speaking to them, and is constantly loving them and is willing to forgive them. Also, be sure to foster the use of sacramentals among your family members. Sacramentals are sacred signs that make everyday events holy and prepare our hearts to receive the sacraments in a deeper way. Examples of sacramentals include the Sign of the Cross, holy water, wearing a brown scapular or religious medals, blessings, pilgrimages, processions, the Stations of the Cross, sacred art, rosaries and the veneration of relics. Also, promote visits to the Blessed Sacrament with your family members when you are close to a church.

VIII. Try to set the tone in living a simple, humble and non-violent lifestyle. This is a challenge in the materialistic, pleasure-seeking and individualistic culture in which we live today. You are called to heroic virtue here—the very stuff for which a person is canonized a Saint. Movie stars, TV heroes and sports heroes are generally not the best role models for children. Keep watch over the songs your children are listening to and the posters they hang up in their bedrooms. You and your husband should work together wisely with firm, loving discipline and order.

IX. Try to discern with your children—individually—the call of the Lord upon each one of their lives. Each child is called to put God first and to serve Him with his or her whole heart. This is a difficult, yet heroic task in today’s world. You can teach your children how to do it. Pray for the wisdom and know-how.

X. With your husband, make Sunday truly the *Lord’s Day* and a day of family togetherness. Go as a family to Mass each week and Confession each month. Ensure that your family goes to Mass on Holy Days as well. Make sure Sunday is truly a day of prayer, relaxation and recreation.