

Third Wednesday of Lent

Homily of Bishop Barres

St. Agnes Cathedral

March 6, 2024

Last Sunday at Mass, the first reading focused on the Ten Commandments from the twentieth chapter of the Book of Exodus.

Today, in the fifth chapter of the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus focuses on the Commandments as well.

He says: “Whoever obeys and teaches these commandments will be called greatest in the Kingdom of heaven.”

The Ten Commandments express the power, the beauty and the love God has for us.

They reflect how we are made in the image and likeness of God and correspond to the deepest truths about our human nature.

In John’s Gospel, Jesus says: “If you love me, keep my commandments.”

Our deep love of God guides our observance of the commandments.

They teach us how to love God with all our hearts, minds and souls.

They teach us to love our neighbors as ourselves.

They are a Lighthouse pointing us to God and keeping us off the dangerous rocks of moral relativism and self-destruction that can shipwreck our lives.

The Ten Commandments liberate us.

They connect our freedom with objective truth and He who is the Way, the Truth and the Life.

The Ten Commandments are objectively true. They are not antiquated or behind the times. They are perpetually relevant and up to date because they are perpetually true.

Far from constraining us or enslaving us, the Ten Commandments liberate us and help us to be truly free to follow God.

They teach us that the holy life is the happy life

The Ten Commandments help us to live happy lives on earth.

The Ten Commandments teach us how to love God and our neighbor. The first three commandments focus on our relationship with God. The following seven commandments focus on our relationship with each other.

The first three commandments – to have no other gods, to avoid taking the name of the Lord in vain and to keep the Sabbath day holy – direct us to the existence of a loving God, whom we should worship, whose name we should honor in prayer, praise, and witness.

The last seven commandments require that we respect family, life, property, marriage and truth.

The Ten Commandments point us to Eternal Life with God in Heaven.