

TEN COMMANDMENTS OF A WIFE & MOTHER

“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. For example, sports have become a false god in America – especially on Sundays – and we tend to overemphasize them. Similarly, soap operas glamorize immoral and illicit relationships.
- V. **Pray with your** husband and regularly so. 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. Foster the use of sacramentals among your family members. Sacramentals are “sacred signs which bear a certain resemblance to the Sacraments and by means of which spiritual effects are signified and obtained through the prayers of the Church” (*Catechism of the Catholic Church, Glossary*). Examples of sacramentals include the Sign of the Cross, holy water, enrollment in the Brown Scapular of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel, religious medals, blessings, pilgrimages, processions, the Stations of the Cross, sacred art, rosaries and the veneration of relics. While sacramentals do differ from the seven Sacraments, they are still very important in the life of a Catholic Christian. Also, promote spontaneous visits to the Blessed Sacrament with your family members, for instance, when in town running errands.

- 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. This calls for wisdom on the part of both you and your husband – *and* firm, loving discipline and order from both of you.
- 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. Encourage your family to receive frequently the Sacrament of Confession and the Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist. Help to ensure the celebrating of the Sacraments by your family members on a regular basis. The Sacrament of Confession should be partaken of at least monthly and the Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist should be partaken of at least weekly. Take your family to Sunday Mass *precisely as a family*. Do not give your teenagers an option here. If you do, you are not fulfilling your vocation as a mother. Again, do everything in your power to make Sunday the *Lord’s Day* and a day of family togetherness; that is, a day of prayer, relaxation and recreation. This calls for creativity, imagination and frequent planning in advance. Seek input from your husband and older children in this regard. Remember, any good and wholesome recreation is really a “re-creation” of both body and soul.

(Inspired by and adapted from *Superabundant Family Love* by Fr. Bill McCarthy, MSA)

PRAYER FOR OUR FAMILY

Heavenly Father, most good and gracious God, sustain our family in Your love. Make our family home a place where holiness and love abound. In our daily actions, help each one of us to learn to be more like Jesus. Aid our family to imitate the Holy Family of Nazareth: Jesus, Mary and Joseph. Help our family to learn from the good example of those families that especially please You in their way of life. May our family members learn to give good example always by living lives in true Christian faith, hope and love. Assist our family in learning to bear pain and suffering as Jesus did. Aid our family members, too, in overcoming difficulties and carrying their crosses. Help our family life to lead to Jesus Christ, the Source of all Truth and happiness. We ask this through Your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, Who lives and reigns with You in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God for ever and ever. AMEN.

FAMILY PRAYER TO OUR BLESSED MOTHER, MARY

Holy Mary, Virgin Mother of God, we seek your patronage and we invoke you under your title “Queen of Families.” O Blessed Mother, you were conceived without sin. May every family choose you this day as the model for their household, along with St. Joseph, your most loving, chaste and caring spouse. Through your Immaculate Conception, preserve all families from every disaster, from all violence and from every misfortune. O Holy Virgin, bless and protect all families, strengthen them in trial and keep them from every evil. AMEN.

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