



Consecration in Truth®

# Family Catechesis

Educates adults in the truths of the faith and empowers them to lead their families in learning and living the faith. Taught by Roman Curia Cardinal Francis Arinze.



Discussion Guide 29A

## Greatest Commandment (Questions 276-277)

### The Apostolate's Family Catechism™

#### Opening Prayer (5 min.)

Gospel Reading (see Liturgical Calendar box). Pause to reflect. When you are ready, end with an Our Father, Hail Mary and Glory Be. Announce the *Liturgical Season* and the *Significant Feast Days* for the week.

#### Recitation of Memory Verse (5 min.)

**John 14:15** If you love me, you will keep my commandments.

#### Discussion and Sharing on

#### *The Apostolate's Family Catechism* (40 min.)

- Announce the topic and questions to be covered.
- Watch Commentaries with Cardinal Arinze video **Q# 276-277** (4 min.). Discuss.
- Read **Q# 276-277** aloud and discuss the answers. Point out the illustrations and diagrams and allow family members to explain them. Read the captions on the illustrations. Read the Scripture quotes.
- Discuss the "Doctrine, Moral, Worship Exercises" at the end of **Q# 277** and the "Thought Provokers" related to **Q# 276-277** at the end of **Chapter 77**.

#### Closing Prayer (10 min.)

Go step-by-step through the Ten Steps to Mental Prayer.

End by praying the **Q# 277** Summary Prayer.



### Liturgical Calendar

- **Season:** Ordinary Time
- **Upcoming Sunday Readings:**  
**First Reading** Job 7:1-4, 6-7  
**Second Reading** 1 Cor 9:16-19, 22-23  
**Gospel Reading** Mark 1: 29-39
- **Significant Feast Days This Week:**  
2/8: St. Josephine Bakhita, Virgin  
2/10: St. Scholastica, Virgin  
2/11: Our Lady of Lourdes



### Scripture Memory Verse

Take turns reciting or reading at family meals

#### Mark 12:30-31

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



### Family Activity

#### Building Family Love

Begin this game by praying and asking God to open eyes and hearts to see what He sees.

Put all family members' names in a container and draw one out. The one whose name is drawn then draws another name. Now the first person is to tell the second person all the ways he sees God's love in him or her. When done, the second person is up. Repeat the process. When all names are drawn, the last person tells the first person how he sees God's love in him. The game is over. God is love!

## Chapter One Hundred Twenty-Nine

### Perfect Christian Love - I

**Q. 276. What is the summary of all of the commandments?**

The commandments, summed up, deal specifically with the love of God and the love of neighbor.

“And you shall love the Lord your God with your whole heart, and with your whole soul, and with your whole mind, and with your whole strength. This is the first commandment. And the second is like to it: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself’ ” (Mark 12:30-31). Other words and examples of Jesus tell us how these two commandments are to be practiced. (cf. V.S., Section 14, 16, 28, 73)

#### *Vatican Council II*

“In his fatherly care for all of us, God desired that all men should form one family and deal with each other in a spirit of brotherhood. All, in fact, are destined to the very same end, namely God Himself, since they have been created in the likeness of God Who ‘made from one every nation of men who live on all the face of the earth’ (Acts 17:26). Love of God and one’s neighbor, then, is the first and greatest commandment.”

*Modern World, 24*

(cf. V.S., Section 14)

“The greatest commandment of the law is to love God with one’s whole heart and one’s neighbor as oneself (cf. Mt. 22:37-39). Christ has made this love of neighbor his personal commandment and has enriched it with a new meaning when he willed himself, along with his brothers, to be the object of this charity saying: ‘When you showed it to one of the least of my brothers here, you showed it to me’ (Mt. 25:40). In assuming human nature Christ has united all humanity to himself in a supernatural solidarity which makes us one family. He has made charity the distinguishing mark of his disciples, by His



See Papally Promulgated  
**Catechism of the Catholic Church**

Q. 276. See paragraphs: 1814, 2196

See encyclical **Veritatis Splendor** (Splendor of Truth)

Q. 276. See sections: 14, 16, 28, 73

words: ‘By this will all love you bear one another.’

(cf. V.S., Section 14)

**Q. 277. Why is love of God the first commandment?**

Love of God is the source of all love; (1) *in God’s plan*, and; (2) *in God’s plan for us*. Christ, so that men might love one another.

1. *Love of God is the first commandment because*

God loves us. He always loves us. He has loved us from all eternity, and He will love us to the end of time. The depth of God’s love for us is so great that no one in this world, as to give His own life for us, may not perish (1 John 4:19).

Because God loves us so deeply, St. John goes on to say: “Dearly beloved, let us love one another, for God loves us. And every one that loves God, He that loves not, knows not the love of God (1 John 4:7-8).”

God watches over us and His love is the beat of our hearts dependent on Him. All things in life which we love, our families, our friends, and our children in Baptism, are united to Him in Heaven, if we love Him.

He gives us the privilege of loving Him by sanctifying ourselves. He gives us the grace to grant us the love of God, especially through the Holy Spirit. It is the fruit of His immense love for us. It is the most important. Jesus said, “I



See **F**  
**Catechism**

Q. 277. See paragraphs: 1814, 2196

See encyclical **Veritatis Splendor** (Splendor of Truth)

Q. 277. See sections: 14, 16, 28, 73

words: 'By this will all men know you for my disciples, by the love you bear one another' (Jn. 13:35)." *Lay People*, 8

(cf. V.S., Section 14)

**Q. 277. Why is love of God the soul of morality?**

Love of God is the soul of morality because: (1) *God is love* and; (2) *in God's plan that love reaches out to men in Jesus Christ, so that men might be united by their love for God and for one another.*

1. *Love of God is the soul of morality because God is love.*

God loves us. He always has loved us and always will love us. He has loved us from the moment He thought of creating us, and He will love us for all eternity. St. John tells us of the depth of God's love for each individual. "For God so loved the world, as to give His only begotten Son; that whoever believes in Him, may not perish, but may have life everlasting" (John 3:16).

Because God loves every human being with an undying, deep love, St. John goes so far as to call God "love" or "charity." "Dearly beloved, let us love one another, for charity is of God. And every one that loves, is born of God, and knows God. He that loves not, knows not God: for God is charity" (1 John 4:7-8).

God watches over us every moment of our existence. Every beat of our hearts depends on Him. God gave us all of the good things in life which we have: our lives, our health, our families and our friends, and our possessions. God made us His children in Baptism, and promised to grant us eternal life with Him in Heaven, if we are faithful to Him.

He gives us the privilege of sharing His divine life by giving us sanctifying grace through the sacraments. He continues to grant us the blessings of the Catholic Church, especially through the sacraments and God's truth. Because of His immense love for us, He forgives our sins, if we are repentant. Jesus said, "For the Father Himself loves you, be-



*See Papally Promulgated  
Catechism of the Catholic Church*

*Q. 277. See paragraphs: 1822-1829*

*See encyclical Veritatis Splendor (Splendor of Truth)*

*Q. 277. See sections: 25, 52, 67, 82, 90, 95, 96, 97, 99, 104, 108, 115*

cause you have loved Me, and have believed that I came out from God" (John 16:27).

Whenever we think of God's great love for us, we ought to desire to love God in return. Our one aim in life should be union with God — through a love which expresses itself in faithful service. Our lives must be joyous since God is with us.

*Prayer: Jesus, You teach us that the law of charity demands that we love God with our whole heart, soul, and mind, that is, with our whole being. Yet, our love for God need not be a love that we can feel, for, essentially, true love consists not in any sensible feeling, but in acts of the mind and will. Since You are truth and goodness themselves, and since You have loved us with an everlasting love, we ought to love You above all creatures and with our entire beings. May this always be so. Amen.*

2. Love of God is the soul of morality because in God's plan that love reaches out to men in Jesus Christ, so that men might be united by their love for God and for one another.

Jesus Christ, in His perfect love for us, died on the Cross to atone for, or make up for, our sins and to regain for us the life of grace and eternal life with God. Christ is our Mediator with God. God's love reaches us through Jesus Christ, the God-man.

Christ and His Father sent God the Holy Spirit into the hearts of the Apostles. The Spirit — Who is the love of God in the Trinity — is God's supreme gift to the Church. The great work of the Spirit is to unite men into a community of love.

The Holy Spirit's chief gift is His personal presence in those who believe in and follow Christ. By means of His personal presence and His gift of sanctifying grace, the Spirit makes us pleasing to God and set apart for Him. Through sanctifying grace, He makes us children in the family of God, and unites us in faith and charity to Christ and to each other. As a community of believers, we become heirs of God's Kingdom. This is God's plan for us, a plan that has its source in His love.

All of Christianity is based on love, i.e., charity, or unselfish love. Man is created to love, grows by loving, and finally, finds himself by loving. St. Paul said: "If I speak with the tongues of men, and of angels, and have not charity, I am be-

come as sounding  
13:1). (cf. V.S., Section 108)

"Owe no man any  
loves his neighbor,  
commit adultery. Y  
shall not bear false  
be any other comm:  
shall love your neig  
works no evil. Love

(cf. V.S., Section 25, 52, 6

"God is love, and  
God abides in him'  
our hearts through  
(cf. Rm. 5:5); there  
charity, by which w  
bor because of Him

*Prayer: Our God  
our love for You n  
our own interests,  
in a free and ge  
goodness, and love  
devotion, we shoul  
Whom all these q  
love You above all*

*Lord, we want  
selves to Your se  
so that we may p  
fices, holy and p  
souls be turned  
our affections de  
selves to Your w*

come as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal" (1 Corinthians 13:1). (cf. V.S., Section 108)

### **Sacred Scripture**

"Owe no man anything, but to love one another. For he that loves his neighbor, has fulfilled the law. For you shall not commit adultery. You shall not kill. You shall not steal. You shall not bear false witness. You shall not covet. And if there be any other commandment, it is comprised in this word, you shall love your neighbor as yourself. The love of our neighbor works no evil. Love, therefore, is the fulfilling of the law."

*Romans 13:8-10*

(cf. V.S., Section 25, 52, 67, 82, 90, 95, 96, 97, 99, 104, 115)

### **Vatican Council II**

"God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him" (1 Jn. 4:16). God has poured out His love in our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us (cf. Rm. 5:5); therefore the first and most necessary gift is charity, by which we love God above all things and our neighbor because of Him." *The Church, 42*

**Prayer:** *Our God, we wish to love You for Your own sake. Let our love for You not be selfish. May we not love You to advance our own interests, but rather let us love You with our whole heart in a free and generous gift of ourselves. If beauty, truth, goodness, and love attract and claim our admiration, love, and devotion, we should not find it difficult to love You, our God, in Whom all these qualities reside to the highest degree. May we love You above all things now and forever. Amen.*

### **Chapter Summary Prayer**

**L**ord, we want to love You perfectly by consecrating ourselves to Your service, with all our powers of body and soul, so that we may present our bodies in chastity as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God. May all the powers of our souls be turned towards You; may our minds think of You, our affections delight in You, and our wills conform themselves to Your will.

*All is vanity, except loving You and serving You. If we love You with our whole heart, we shall fear neither death nor punishment, neither judgment nor hell, because perfect love will prepare our souls for a more intimate union with You.*

*Besides, You have been very kind to us. Love moved You to create us and to redeem us. Innumerable are the graces and blessings which You have given us in Your love. All that we see, hear, or feel which is good and beautiful is a gift from You. May all creatures be so many mirrors wherein we may behold You, and so many steps whereby we may ascend to You, the God of our love. Amen.*

*Transformation in Chr*

*Familiaris Consortio, J*

## Cross-References for Chapter 129

### Q. 276. What is the summary of all of the commandments?

#### Catechisms / Theology Books

- The Teaching of Christ* [First Edition], Lawler, Wuerl and Lawler, pp. 288-290, 291-292;  
*The Teaching of Christ* [Second Edition], Lawler, Wuerl and Lawler, pp. 277-278, 280-281;  
*The Catholic Catechism*, Hardon, p. 571;  
*Fundamentals of Catholicism*, Baker, Vol. 1, pp. 122-123;  
*Basics of the Faith: A Catholic Catechism*, Schreck, p. 238;  
*The Church's Confession of Faith*, German Bishops' Conference, pp. 36-38, 60-61, 234;  
*Faith for Today*, Hogan and LeVoir, pp. 41-47, 218-219, 243, 250, 255-256.

#### Papal Documents

- On the Dignity and Vocation of Women*, John Paul II, sect. 7, 29.

### Q. 277. Why is love of God the soul of morality?

#### Catechisms / Theology Books

- The Teaching of Christ* [First Edition], Lawler, Wuerl and Lawler, pp. 291-292, 301-303, 312;  
*The Teaching of Christ* [Second Edition], Lawler, Wuerl and Lawler, pp. 280-281, 289-291, 300-301;  
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