

## First Monday of Lent ~ 2/26

"You shall not steal; you shall not deal falsely; and you shall not lie to one another. And you shall not swear falsely by my name, profaning the name of your God: I am the Lord." (Lev.19:11-12)

Who hasn't been in the presence of a mother and child when the mother is trying to help the child accomplish some task? Often the little one can be heard saying, "Gee, mom, I can do this by myself. I don't need you to tell me what to do." The child doesn't want to be reminded that he or she may still need mom's advice or help.

How many of us read this passage from Leviticus and feel our feathers ruffle just a little? We wouldn't like to think of ourselves as toddlers or teenagers in faith but when we hear a reading filled with "you shall not" doesn't it honestly raise a red flag or two? Hearing anyone tell us in no uncertain terms that we must do something or that we must act a certain way can easily raise our hackles.

We want to say; "I know this. You don't have to remind me and you certainly don't have to say it so bluntly." We would like to tell God that we are mature people and we know what is right and wrong. We may even want to argue that not everything in life is as clear-cut as this reading seems to indicate.

If we look under the surface of this resentment we may uncover a side that is not quite as developed, as we would have hoped. We have unearthed the part of us that doesn't like correction or instruction. Perhaps we uncover the teenage spirit that still has not fully grown up. An even closer look may help us to see that it is really the last line that may be the most difficult, the "I am the Lord" part. Perhaps if we are honest we may realize that it is our need for God and for His instruction that irritates the most.

We will never be too old for God to instruct. We will always need to be reminded of what we can and what we cannot do. Once we are able to acknowledge fully who God is and when we come to understand that we are not God then these words of instruction will be more of a blessing than a rebuke.

### *Questions for Reflection*

- 1. Does "you shall not" sit well with you? If not, why not?*
- 2. What commandments of God are the most difficult for you to embrace?*