

GOD REVEALS A PATH TO LIFE

KNOW YOUR FAITH SERIES

Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC) #2052: “Teacher, what good deed must I do to have eternal life?” (Mt.19:16). To the young man who asked this question, Jesus tells him to keep the Commandments.

Though they had been given through Moses to the people long before, they were still valid for Jesus’ contemporaries as they are for us today.

It may be beneficial to reflect and recount the circumstances that gave origin to the Ten Commandments.

The Book of Exodus in the Bible tells about the liberation of the people of Israel from slavery in Egypt.

Moses leads the people during their long journey through the wilderness on their way to the Promised Land, a journey which normally should have taken a few weeks, but which, instead, took forty years to complete.

WHY DID IT TAKE SO LONG?

During their stay in Egypt, the descendants of the twelve tribes of Israel had become numerous; so numerous in fact, that to Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, the presence of Israel in their midst was a potential threat to their national security. In order to control them, the King condemned them to forced labour as slaves.

Though the people of Israel had maintained their own distinct identity in matters of customs, traditions and beliefs, yet the pagan practices of the Egyptian religion that surrounded them, like idols worship, had infiltrated and influenced their mind and their life.

As Moses led Israel on the arduous journey out of Egypt, God entrusted him with the mission of uniting and forming these people into a nation, and to teach them to be grateful and faithful to the One True God who had delivered them from slavery.

Moses would remind his people over and over again what God had done in the past and would continue to do for them in the future, if they will obey his ordinances.

God had plans for his people, “plans for their welfare and not for harm, to give them a future with hope” (Jeremiah 29:11).

God also revealed to his people through Moses that He intended to enter into a love relationship with them, that they were a “chosen people” dear to Him: “For you are a people holy to the Lord your God: the Lord your God has chosen you out of all the peoples on earth to be His people, His treasured possession” (Deuteronomy 7:6).

The God of Israel is the “Living God”, the One and only, there is no other God but Him (Dt 5:6). He is not like the false gods of the Egyptians, which were made of wood or stone that represented animals or other created objects.

God abhorred these idols and expected his people to get rid of them

(Dt 7:5).

It took forty years for “the chosen people” to learn to renounce the pagan practices they had assimilated in Egypt, to purify themselves of their sins committed against the Living God, and to learn to obey the laws that God gave them through Moses.

THAT IS WHY IT TOOK ISRAEL SO LONG TO REACH THE PROMISED LAND!

God has PLANS for us too!

Our forty days of LENT represent the forty years that Israel spent in the desert, learning God’s ways.

We, today, are also called by our Living God to renounce our idols which we have acquired along the way, the idols of selfish attachments, those habits which go against the Ten Commandments.

LET US LEARN GOD’S WAYS. Let us purify ourselves in the Sacrament of Reconciliation, and begin anew the walk on the **PATH OF LIFE, ETERNAL LIFE (CCC #2057-2058).**