

**“Teacher, what good must I do to have eternal life” (Matthew 19:16)**

To the young man who asked this question, Jesus answered, “If you would enter into life, keep the commandments”, and then he added, “Come, follow Me” (Mt 19:16-21). To follow Jesus involves keeping the commandments. The law has not been abolished but man is invited

to rediscover it in the Person of the divine Master who realised it perfectly in himself, revealed its full meaning and attested to its permanent validity.

**HOW DID JESUS INTERPRET THE LAW?**

Jesus interpreted the Law in the light of the twofold yet single commandment of love the fullness of the Law: “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the greatest and first commandment. And the second is like it: you shall love your neighbour as yourself. On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets” (Matthew 22:37-40).

**What does “decalogue” mean?**

Decalogue means “ten words” (Exodus 34:28). These words sum up the Law given by God to the people of Israel in the context of the Covenant mediated by Moses. This Decalogue, in presenting the commandments of the love of God (the first three) and of one’s neighbour (the other seven), traces for the chosen people and for every person in particular the path to a life freed from the slavery sin.

**What is the bond between the Decalogue and the covenant?**

The Decalogue must be understood in the light of the Covenant in which God revealed himself and made known His will. In observing the commandments, the people manifested their belonging to God and they answered his initiative of love with thanksgiving.

**What importance does the church give to the Decalogue?**

The Church, in fidelity to Scripture and to the example of Christ, acknowledges the primordial importance and significance of the Decalogue. Christians are obliged to keep it.

### **Why does the Decalogue constitute an organic unity?**

The Ten Commandments form an organic and indivisible whole because each commandment refers to the other commandments and to the entire Decalogue. To break one commandment, therefore, is to violate the entire law.

### **Why does the Decalogue enjoin serious obligations?**

It does so because the Decalogue expresses the fundamental duties of man towards God and towards his neighbour.

### **IS IT POSSIBLE TO KEEP THE DECALOGUE?**

Yes, because Christ without whom we can do nothing, enables us to keep it with the gift of His Spirit and His Grace.

## **CHAPTER ONE**



**“you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind”**

**The first commandment: I am the lord your God – (Exodus 20:2)**

**What is implied in the affirmation of God: “I am the Lord your God” (Exodus 20:2)?**

This means that the faithful must guard and activate the three theological virtues and must avoid sins which are opposed to them.

*Faith* believes in God and rejects everything that is opposed to it, such as, deliberate doubt, unbelief, heresy, apostasy, and schism.

*Hope* trustingly awaits the blessed vision of God and His help, while avoiding despair and presumption.

*Charity* loves God above all things and therefore repudiates indifference, ingratitude, lukewarmness, sloth or spiritual indolence, and that hatred of God which is born of pride.

*It is essential that every Catholic has access to good Catechesis to be able to deepen their faith. The Diocese of Plymouth recommends the many Catechetical Workshops from 'Franciscan at Home,' for more information on access to these and online or real group sessions contact [deborah.vankroonenburg@prcdtr.org.uk](mailto:deborah.vankroonenburg@prcdtr.org.uk)*