

Pastoral Letter on the Year of Decalogue & Precepts of the Church

Dear Fathers, Brothers, Sisters and My Dear People,

Thy Kingdom Come!

We know as per our pastoral plan the year 2024 is set aside as the Year of Decalogue and Precepts of the Church. They are the very basic rules that guide us in our human existence as social beings and members of the Christian community as parts of the mystical body of Christ, the Church. The Decalogue and Precepts of the Church are pointers to right living as humans and Christians.

Decalogue contains ten laws, of which the first three pertains to our relationship with God:

- I. I am the Lord your God: You shall have no gods before me.
- II. You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain.
- III. Remember to keep holy the Lord's Day.

The rest, fourth to tenth pertains to relationship among ourselves:

- IV. Honor your father and mother.
- V. You shall not kill.
- VI. You shall not commit adultery.
- VII. You shall not steal.
- VIII. You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.
- IX. You shall not covet your neighbor's wife.
- X. You shall not covet your neighbor's goods.

They help us to build up our relationship with God and Others. As creatures we give obeisance to God for 'our joy' and build up relationship among ourselves for 'our growth'. They help us to form a good society of mutual respect and love. It also enhances our hope for future and even life after death. The observances of them build up human relationships for joyful living and good neighborhood. The Ten Commandments are summarized into two:

- I. You shall love the Lord your God above all.
- II. You shall love your neighbour as yourself.

Jesus exhorted his disciples in the following words: "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" (Mk

12:30-31). The Ten Commandments are given to Moses on mount Sinai (Ex 20:1-17 & Deut 5: 1-21) to teach the people of Israel right worship. God does not deliver them from slavery in order to free them from all attachments, but rather that they might more fully belong to him. God saves his people and makes them a holy nation, a priestly nation because the people of God now exist for the sake of the whole world to intercede, to make sacrifice, to mediate that others may see the light and be drawn to it.

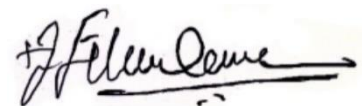
The Ten Commandments must be read and lived within the background a saving God. It is true that Ten Commandments are for all peoples, and they can be displayed anywhere and everywhere. But the way the Ten Commandments are truly discovered is to see their embodiment in those who believe that they have redeemed by God.

The Precepts of the Church are the following:

1. Attend Holy Qurbana on Sundays and days of obligation.
2. Confess your sins at least once a year.
3. Receive the Eucharist at least once a year.
4. Observe days of fasting and abstinence.
5. Provide for the needs of the Church.

These precepts add beauty to our Christian discipleship as members of the community of the faithful. Each of them is meant to be faithful Christians and members of the Church. The Christian life is centred around Eucharistic celebration, reception of Holy Eucharist and live as reconciled community. “When you are offering your gift at the altar, if you remember that your brother or sister has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother or sister, and then come and offer your gift” (Mt 5:23-24). These precepts invite us to form communities after the model of the first Christian community where they lived in one mind and heart. They shared with one another everything they had. There was no one in the group who was in need. They distributed their earnings accordingly to each one’s need. (Cf. Act 4:32-37). The Precepts of the Church are certain laws considered binding on the faithful. They are moral and ecclesiastical guidelines for a communitarian living.

The purpose of setting apart a year dedicated to Year of Decalogue and Precepts of the Church is to study them systematically so as to apply them to our life as Christians for a better living schedule.



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