



The Holy See

POPE FRANCIS **GENERAL AUDIENCE**

Paul VI Audience Hall

Wednesday, 28 November 2018

[Multimedia]

Dear Brothers and Sisters, Good morning!

In today's catechesis, which concludes the series on the Ten Commandments, we can take as the key theme that of *desires*, which allows us to review the journey we have made and summarize the stages we have completed in reading the text of the Decalogue, always in the light of the full revelation in Christ.

We began with *gratitude* as the basis of the relationship of trust and obedience: God, as we saw, asked for nothing before he had given much more. He invites us to obedience in order to deliver us from the misleading forms of idolatry that have so much power over us. Indeed, seeking self-realization in the idols of this world empties us and enslaves us, while what gives us stature and consistency is the relationship with the One who, in Christ, makes us children by virtue of his fatherhood (cf. Eph 3:14-16).

This entails a process of blessing and liberation, which is true, authentic rest. As the Psalm states: "For God alone my soul waits in silence; from him comes my salvation" (Ps 62[61]:1).

This liberated life embraces our personal history and reconciles us with what, from childhood to the present, we have experienced, becoming adults and being able to give the proper weight to the realities and the people in our life. By this path we enter a relationship with our neighbour which, springing from the love that God demonstrates in Jesus Christ, is a call to the beauty of *fidelity, generosity and authenticity*.

But to live in this way — that is, in the beauty of fidelity, generosity and authenticity — we need a *new heart*, inhabited by the Holy Spirit (cf. Ez 11:19; 36:26). I wonder: how does this heart

‘transplant’, from an old heart to a new heart, come about? Through the gift of *new desires* (cf. Rom 8:6) that are sown in us by the grace of God, in a particular way, through the Ten Commandments fulfilled by Jesus, as he teaches in the ‘Sermon on the Mount’ (cf. Mt 5:15-48). Indeed, in contemplating the life described in the Decalogue — that is, a grateful, free, authentic, blessed, adult existence, as guardian and lover of a steadfast, generous and sincere life — almost without realizing it we stand before Christ again. The Decalogue is his ‘x-ray’: it is like a photographic negative that lets his face appear — as in the Holy Shroud. And thus the Holy Spirit renders our heart fruitful, placing in it desires that are his gift, the *desires of the Spirit*. To desire according to the Spirit, to desire with the rhythm of the Spirit, to desire with the music of the Spirit.

Looking to Christ we see beauty, goodness, truth. And the Spirit engenders a life that, supporting these desires of his, kindles hope, faith and love in us.

In this way we can better understand why the Lord Jesus did not come to abolish the law but to fulfil it, to develop it, and as the law according to the flesh was a series of prescriptions and prohibitions, according to the Spirit this same law becomes life (cf. Jn 6:63; Eph 2:15), because it is no longer a rule but the very flesh of Christ, who loves us, seeks us, forgives us, consoles us and in his Body recreates the communion with the Father, lost through the disobedience of sin. And thus, the literal negative, the negative expression used in the Commandments — ‘you shall not steal’, ‘you shall not insult’, ‘you shall not kill’ — that ‘not’ is transformed into a positive approach: to love, to make room in my heart for others, all desires that sow positivity. And this is the fullness of the law that Jesus came to bring us.

In Christ, and in him alone, the Decalogue ceases to be a condemnation (cf. Rom 8:1) and becomes the authentic truth of human life, namely, a desire for love — a desire for good, to do good is born here — a desire for joy, for peace, for magnanimity, for benevolence, for goodness, for fidelity, for meekness, self-control. It goes from that ‘no’ to this ‘yes’: the positive attitude of a heart that opens with the power of the Holy Spirit.

This is what seeking Christ in the Decalogue means: to make our heart fruitful so that it may be filled with love and open to God’s work. When men and women comply with the desire to live according to Christ, they are opening the door to salvation which cannot fail to occur because God the Father is generous and, as the Catechism says, “thirsts that we may thirst for him” (n. 2560).

If evil desires defile mankind (cf. Mt 15:18-20), the Spirit places in our heart his holy desires which are the seeds of new life (cf. 1 Jn 3:9). Indeed, the new life is not a titanic effort to comply with a rule, but rather, the new life is God’s own Spirit that begins to guide us to his fruits, in a happy synergy between our joy in being loved and his joy in loving us. The two joys come together: God’s joy in loving us and our joy in being loved.

This is what the Decalogue is for us Christians: to contemplate Christ in order to open ourselves

up to receive his heart, to receive his will, to receive his Holy Spirit.

Special Greetings

I greet the English-speaking pilgrims and visitors taking part in today's Audience, especially those from England, Australia and the United States of America. Upon all of you, and your families, I invoke the Lord's blessings of joy and peace. God bless you!

I extend a special greeting to *young people, the elderly, the sick and newlyweds*. Next Sunday we will begin the liturgical time of Advent. Let us prepare our hearts to receive Jesus the Saviour; let us recognize in Christmas Christ's encounter with humanity, especially those who, still today, live on the margins of society, in need and in suffering.
