



The Holy See

VIDEO-MESSAGE OF HOLY FATHER FRANCIS
TO PARTICIPANTS IN THE INITIATIVE ENTITLED
"TEN SQUARES FOR TEN COMMANDMENTS"

Saturday, 8 June 2013

Good evening to you all!

I am glad to join you who are taking part in this rereading of the Ten Commandments in Italy's main squares. The project is called: "When Love gives meaning to your life...". It is on the art of living through the Ten Commandments, which God did not only give to Moses but also to us, men and women of every era. Many thanks to the leaders of Renewal in the Holy Spirit — these members of Renewal in the Holy Spirit are excellent, congratulations! — who have organized this praiseworthy initiative in collaboration with the [Pontifical Council for Promoting the New Evangelization](#) and with the Italian Episcopal Conference. I extend my thanks to all those who generously contribute to the implementation of this special project in the Year of Faith. Let us therefore ask ourselves: what do these Ten Words mean for us? What do they say to our turbulent and bewildered time which seems to want to do without God?

The Ten Commandments are God's gift. The word "commandment" is not in style; it reminds people today of something negative, of someone's desire to impose restrictions, to put obstacles in life's way. Unfortunately history, even recent history, is marked by forms of tyranny, ideologies, types of logic that have imposed and oppressed and have not sought the good of people but, on the contrary, power, success, and profit.

The Ten Commandments come from a God who created us for love, from a God who made a Covenant with mankind, a God who only wants man's good. Let us give God our trust! Let us trust God! The Ten Commandments point out a path for us to follow, and they are a kind of "ethical

code” in order to build just societies attuned to man. How much inequality there is in the world! What hunger for food and for truth! What moral and material poverty stem from the rejection of God and from replacing him with so many idols! Let us be guided by these Ten Words that enlighten and direct those who seek peace, justice and dignity.

The Ten Commandments point to a way of freedom which finds fullness in the law of the Spirit that is not written on stone tables but on the heart (cf. 2 Cor 3:3): it is here that the Ten Commandments are written! It is fundamental to remember when God gave the Ten Commandments to the People of Israel through Moses. At the Red Sea the People had experienced great liberation; they had felt tangibly the power and faithfulness of God, of the God who sets us free. Now on Mount Sinai God himself points out to his People, and to all of us, the way to stay free, a way that is engraved in the human heart as a universal moral law (cf. Ex 20:1-17; Dt 5:1-22). We must not see the Ten Commandments as limitations of freedom — no, that is not what they are — but rather as signposts *to* freedom. They are not restrictions but indicators of freedom. They teach us to avoid the slavery to which we are condemned by so many idols that we ourselves build — we have experimented with them so often in history, and we are still experimenting with them today. They teach us to open ourselves to a broader dimension than that of the material, and to show people respect, overcoming the greed for power, for possessions, for money, in order to be honest and sincere in our relations, to protect the whole of creation and to nourish our planet with lofty, noble spiritual ideals. Following the Ten Commandments means being faithful to ourselves and to our most authentic nature, and walking towards the genuine freedom that Christ taught us in the Beatitudes (cf. Mt 5:3-12, 17; Lk 6:20-23).

The Ten Commandments are a law of love. Moses climbed the mountain to receive the tablets of the Law from God. Jesus journeys in the opposite direction: the Son of God humbles himself, he comes down into our humanity to show us the profound meaning of these Ten Words: you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength and your neighbour as yourself (cf. Lk 10:27). This is the most profound sense of the Ten Commandments: the commandment of Jesus who bears within him all the commandments, the Commandment of love. For this reason I say that the Ten Commandments are Commandments of Love. Here lies the heart of the Ten Commandments: the Love that comes from God and gives life meaning, love that makes us live, not as slaves but as true sons and daughters. This is love that gives life to all relationships: with God, with ourselves — we often forget this — and with others. True freedom is not that of following our own selfishness, our blind passions; rather it is that of loving, of choosing what is good in every situation. The Ten Commandments are not a hymn to the “no”, they are to the “yes”. A “yes” to God, a “yes” to Love, and since I say “yes” to Love, I say “no” to non-Love, but the “no” is a consequence of that “yes” which comes from God and makes us love.

Let us rediscover and live out the Ten Words of God! Let us say “yes” to these “ten paths of love”, perfected by Christ, in order to defend human beings and direct them to true freedom! May the Virgin Mary accompany us on this journey. I warmly impart my Blessing to you, to your dear ones,

to your cities. My thanks to you all!

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