**A New Exodus and a New Law**

Please read through the following study together. Take turns with each paragraph. The study will eventually direct you to read the *Youcat* together.

*New Exodus*

In the years immediately leading up to Jesus, the Jewish people were seriously on the lookout for the New Moses, and this New Moses would bring about a New Exodus.

The word “exodus” refers to a mass departure of people from one place to another. The first Exodus, with the first Moses, took place when God freed the people of Israel from bondage/slavery in Egypt. For them, the exodus wasn’t just leaving a physical place (Egypt), it meant leaving behind a life of slavery and of worshipping Egypt’s false gods.

In the years leading up to Jesus, the people of Israel again found themselves under the rule of various foreign governments: the Babylonians, Persians, Greeks, and Romans. This is why the people were awaiting a New Exodus — one that would free them from being ruled by a foreign power.

Jesus, the New Moses, does come and he initiates a New Exodus. However, it’s not quite the thing the people who wanted to be freed from Roman power were looking for. So, what exactly is Jesus’ New Exodus? We get some insight into the New Exodus Jesus brings about in Joseph’s dream while Jesus was in Mary’s womb. In this dream, God’s angel says: “Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary your wife into your home. For it is through the holy Spirit that this child has been conceived in her. She will bear a son and you are to name him Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins” (Mt. 1:20-21).

The New Exodus that Jesus initiates doesn’t have to do with freeing the people from a political power (Rome), but with freeing people from their sins.

What exactly is sin? **Talk about this as a family, then check out paragraph 315 in the *Youcat* and read it aloud (both the bold text and the regular font).**

Sin damages relationships—with God, others, and ourselves. And, the more we freely choose to sin, the more enslaved in sin we become. **Can you think of any examples of a time when one sin led to another and to another and eventually you were stuck?** (*Hint: Lying after you do something wrong is a good example here.*)

The *Youcat* (par. 95), reminds us that “As the people of Israel were freed from slavery to Egypt, so Christ frees us from the slavery of sin and the power of death.” How? By forgiving us our sins. Only God can forgive sins, and Jesus is the Son of God (he is God!), the one who forgives our sins and brings us back into right relationship with God and others.

*New Law*

When God made his covenant with the people of Israel, mediated by Moses at Mt. Sinai, he gave the people the Ten Commandments. Similarly, it was expected that the New Moses would provide a New Law—a New Ten Commandments.

You might recall that last year we talked about how Christianity isn’t about rules, but relationship. However, every relationship has rules “built into it,” so to speak. If you are good friends with someone, it means you don’t lie to them or say nasty things about that person behind their back, and so forth. Rules exist for the sake of the relationship, not the relationship for the sake of the rules. Rules clarify or provide definition for the relationship. So, the Ten Commandments help us to know how to live our relationships well.

If you need a refresher on what the Ten Commandments are, please **see *Youcat,* para. 349**.

**Now, why are the Ten Commandments helpful? What do they point out to us, though without providing any real help to solve the problem? (Read *Youcat,* para. 335)**

**Does Jesus do away with the Ten Commandments? (Read *Youcat,* para. 336 and 351)**

In fact, Jesus condenses the whole of the Ten Commandments down into two, yet without abolishing any of them. “You shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind [Commandments 1-3]. This is the greatest and the first commandment. The second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself” [Commandments 4-10] (Mt. 22:37-39).

The Ten Commandments help to lay out the expectations for our relationships with God and others, but the Ten Commandments don’t supply the grace (help or assistance) that we need in order to live them out. In part, this is what it means that Jesus does not abolish the Ten Commandments but fulfills them. He doesn’t do away with the Ten Commandments, but he does give us the grace that we need to abide by them. **For more on this, please read the bold text in *Youcat,* para. 338-339.**