

1 In March or April each year the Jewish community celebrates the Feast of Passover, calling to mind how God used Moses to lead the people from slavery in Egypt. 50 days later - in May or June - is held the Jewish Feast of Pentecost (from a Greek word for 50). It calls to mind that God gave the 10 Commandments to Moses.

2 The 10 Commandments can be phrased in this way:

- 1 Give God the first place in your life.
- 2 Don't love anything more than you love God.
- 3 Show respect to everything that's holy, particularly God's name.
- 4 You need one day of the week free for rest and for worshipping God.
- 5 Respect your parents and all who care for you.
- 6 Do not kill anyone.
- 7 Sexual love is special - keep it for the person you're married to.
- 8 Don't take what isn't yours.
- 9 Don't do people down by spreading lies about them.
- 10 Don't be jealous of what others have.

3 The 10 Commandments reflect a basic common-sense way of living. They can guide us in the short-term and long-term choices that we need to make for a good and happy life.

4 We'll use as a reflection today the words of a hymn that the Jewish community uses at the Feast of Pentecost:

5 **If all the ocean was ink,
and if every blade of grass
was a quill with which to write;
if the earth itself was parchment,
and if every person
started to write on it,
there would not be enough ink or pens**

**or parchment or people
to write fully
of God's love and greatness.**



 Pentecost - or 'Shavuot' in Hebrew - is sometimes called the Feast of Weeks (being 7 weeks - 50 days - after the Feast of Passover). The synagogue is decorated with flowers and fruit as a reminder that, before the Temple in Jerusalem was destroyed nearly 2,000 years ago, the Jews would take offerings of fruit to offer to God there. After the prayer service in the synagogue, the people go home to celebrate a festival meal. Included in the meal are two round loaves of bread which are both decorated with a ladder pattern as a reminder that Moses 'climbed' the mountain to receive the 10 Commandments.

 The 10 Commandments can be found in Exodus 20 and also Deuteronomy 5.

 We could think of what 'rules' a large group might decide upon after a few weeks of being stranded on a very remote desert island. The 10 Commandments have been likened to words on the package of something we have bought: "This will last a long time and work well if the maker's instructions are followed."

 See 15 January for the particular "10 Commandments" signed as a pledge by members of the non-violent movement in the USA in 1963, campaigning for Civil Rights for non-whites.

 It was on the Jewish Feast of Pentecost that the Holy Spirit came upon the Apostles (Acts 2¹⁻¹²). The Jewish Feast of Pentecost is 50 days after Passover; the Christian Feast of Pentecost (or 'Whit Sunday') is 50 days after Easter. See 'Moveable Feasts' in this volume.

 O Lord, all the world belongs to you

This is an excerpt from the page of this date in
'Praying Each Day of the Year',
a 3-volume book
by Nicholas Hutchinson, FSC.

For details:

<http://www.matthew-james.co.uk/>

Could make use of a search engine
to research this topic further.

This material is part of
the prayer and education website
of the De La Salle Brothers
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www.prayingeachday.org