



A true Christian life, Pope Francis said to the pilgrims present in St. Peter's Square for the weekly General Audience, is a grateful response to a generous Father.

Reflecting on the text of the Decalogue, the ten commandments given to Moses on Mount Sinai, the Pope noted it tells of the generosity of God who liberated His people and gave them guidelines with which to go forward.

God sets us free

He said that with the words "I am the Lord your God", the Lord first identifies himself as our God, the God whose love sets us free from all that enslaves us, and he explained that these words show that God's "commands" are really an invitation to respond with gratitude to his saving love, a love disclosed fully in the coming of Jesus his Son.

Thus, Francis said, a Christian must set forth on his or her journey of faith with a feeling of gratitude for God's love.

He said that our obedience to God must not stem from mere obedience to the law and a sense of obligation, but it must be inspired by gratitude and a willingness to accept his offer of love.

God is not a stranger

Reflecting on the words “I am the Lord your God” the Pope explained that the use of that possessive pronoun tells us that we belong to each other, that God is not a stranger: He is your God!

This fact, he said, shines light on the entire Decalogue and reveals the secret of Christian action.

Often our works and actions fail because they stem from selfish or self-centered reasons, and not from gratitude towards God, he explained, pointing out that he who sets forth with a self-centered, egoistical attitude, inevitably ends up thinking and working only for himself.

“Only by accepting God’s offer of love, he said, Christians are able to enjoy true freedom and an abundant life”.

In fact, he continued, the Commandments free us from selfishness because God’s love pushes us forth, thus Christian formation is not founded on willpower, but on our acceptance of salvation and our capacity to let ourselves be loved.

Memory and gratitude

In order to be able to obey God’s laws with this spirit, Francis continued, “we must remember and keep in mind all the beautiful things the Lord has done for us”.

We must also be open to asking Him for help: “Lord save me, Lord show me the way, give me some joy” is a cry and a prayer that we must offer Him the Pope said.

God created us, he concluded, to be free, he wants to break every chain that binds us,

so that, in loving obedience to his will, we can enjoy true freedom and a fulfilling life.

Feast of Sts. Peter and Paul

At the end of the audience during his greetings to Italian pilgrims, the Pope mentioned that on Friday 29 June we mark the Feast of StS. Peter and Paul, the patron saints of Rome.

“Let us learn from these Apostles, he said, the capacity to witness the Gospel with courage, whatever our differences, nurturing the harmony and the friendship that give credibility to the proclamation of faith”.