

Exodus

IGNATIUS CATHOLIC STUDY BIBLE QUESTIONS

Welcome

“You are approaching the ‘word of God’. But for thousands of years, . . . the Word of God has been approaching you.”

The following guide is provided to enhance your reading of Exodus using the *Ignatius Catholic Study Bible*. If you are new to this resource or to reading the Bible, we recommend you read the general Introduction before you begin. It explains what it means that Scripture is the Word of God as well as how we understand and interpret it as Catholics. It also introduces the special features of the Study Bible and tells how they can enrich your reading and study. Additionally, the *Introduction to the Pentateuch* (the five books of Moses, of which Exodus is the second) will provide valuable context for your reading.

A simple rhythm of prayer followed by reading and reflection is offered below to guide you through the book one chapter at a time. Questions draw attention to key footnotes and word studies to lead you into a deeper understanding of what you read and then prompt you to consider how to apply what you have learned. For a deeper dive, take advantage of additional features as you go: not just the other footnotes but also cross-references to Scripture and the *Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC)* that are provided above the footnotes as well as any maps, charts, or essays that are not touched on in the questions.

Don’t miss these helpful icons as you read! They highlight footnotes that pertain to the Church’s criteria for interpreting Scripture (see CCC 112–14):



Be attentive to the content and unity of Scripture

Notes marked with a Bible icon connect Old Testament passages and New Testament mysteries, fostering appreciation for God’s unified plan.



Read Scripture in light of the Church’s living tradition

This icon marks notes drawn from the Holy Spirit’s guidance of Church teaching and the spiritual senses of scripture. Here you’ll find official teaching as well as interpretations from Fathers, Doctors, and saints of the Church.



Be attentive to the “analogy of faith”

Explore notes marked with an icon of keys to learn how the mysteries of faith, revealed in Scripture and defined by the Church, clarify and connect with one another in a unified, coherent way.

May God bless you as you read his word!

of God,* did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped,⁷ but emptied himself,[†] taking the form of a servant,[‡] being born in the likeness of men.[§] And being found in human form he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross.[¶] Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name which is above every name,^{||} that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth,^{|||} and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

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12 Therefore, obeyed, so now much more in salvation with f work in you, bo pleasure.
14 Do all thi tioning,¹⁵ that y children of God crooked and per

2:9–11: Rom 10:9; 14:9; Eph 1:20–21. 2:13: 1 Cor 15:10. 2

2:7 emptied himself: The Greek verb *kenōō* means “empty out” or “render void”. The idea is, not that Christ divested himself of divinity when he united himself with humanity, but that he restricted his rightful exercise of certain divine abilities during his earthly life and accepted certain limitations of the human condition. In effect, the Son of God made himself poor in order to make us rich with his grace (2 Cor 8:9) (CCC 472). • Christ emptied himself by compressing the glory of his Godhead within our smallness. What he always was remained perfect and incomprehensible, but what he assumed was in proportion to the measure of our nature (St. Gregory of Nyssa, *Against Apollinarius*).

2:8 death on a cross: The ultimate indignity. Death by crucifixion was the most awful and degrading form of criminal execution in the ancient world. The Romans reserved it for slaves and insurrectionists. See note on Mk 15:24.

2:9 exalted him: By raising him from the dead, enthroning him in heaven, and clothing his humanity with divine glory. A similar destiny awaits all who humble themselves as Jesus did (3:21; Lk 14:11).

2:10 every knee should bow: An allusion to the divine oath in Is 45:23. • Yahweh swore that all peoples, to the very end of the earth, would acknowledge his Lordship and bow before him in homage. Paul moves Christ into the center of this prophecy as the divine Lord destined to be revered by all. **heaven . . . earth . . . under the earth:** The three principal realms in the world view of ancient Israel (Ex 20:4). Homage will come from all creatures great and small—the angels and saints above, the family of man and beasts spread over the earth, and the dead and the demons of the underworld.

2:11 confess: I.e., acknowledge. Included in this open dec

serious that we pur sense of awe at ser the prospect of sinn Encouragement con readers that God’s g desire (intention) at 21; CCC 308) (CC “work”, he address and trembling”, he good deeds were th not boast of your g within you (St. Augu **2:15 pervers** • Deuterono poetic lawsuit that and ingratitude du

A Thing to Harpagmos (G in the Greek O Occurrences of “robbery”. Its considerable d the leading vi (1) Some, like “something sel

Prepare

Read the Introduction to Exodus, paying particular attention to the *Literary Background* and *Themes* of the book and the *Christian Perspective* on it. What one thing stands out to you, that you would like to remember?

Read the Outline of Exodus to get an overview of the book. What are its major divisions?

Pray

Use the following questions to guide your reading of Exodus, going at a pace that is comfortable to you. Before you begin each new section, pray simply for the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit:

Come, Holy Spirit, open my heart to hear and receive these words as what they truly are, the Word of God. Enlighten my understanding and give me grace to put what I read into practice in my life. Amen.

Read and Reflect

Read and reflect on Exodus as follows:

- Pray before you read
- Read a section of biblical text by itself
- Read the text again, referring to the notes that accompany the text
- For deeper understanding and to aid in applying what you read, answer the questions that follow. The references at the top of each numbered question correspond to particular notes.

At the end of each chapter, review what you have written and linger where you feel drawn, asking the Lord to speak to your heart and into your life. What do you hear? Respond in prayer and ask his help to live what you hear in your attitudes and actions this week.

STUDY QUESTIONS

Chapter 1

For understanding

1. **1:5.** What does the number 70 (descendants of Jacob), which appears several times in the Hebrew Pentateuch, suggest? Where does the figure of 75 descendants appear in the Bible?
2. **1:8–22.** Why were repressive measures taken against Israel, and what measures were taken? What archaeological discoveries give evidence of this? What is an allegorical understanding of this passage?
3. **Word Study: Pharaoh (1:11).** What does the title Pharaoh mean, and to what does it refer? What may explain why the name of the Pharaoh does not always appear alongside his title? Who are the best candidates for the actual Pharaoh during the Exodus, depending on the century in which it happened?
4. **1:11.** To what does the expression “store-cities” refer? Where were the store-cities of Pithom and Raamses located? Assuming the latter city was named in honor of Ramses II, what conclusion can we draw (and not draw) from its appearance in Exodus?

For application

1. **1:7–10.** Pharaoh is concerned that a demographic trend, the multiplication of Hebrew immigrants, is endangering Egypt. What are some demographic trends that cause similar concerns in our country? What is the government doing about these developments? What is an appropriate Christian response to them?
2. **1:17.** What obligation does a citizen have to obey the laws of the government? When is civil disobedience called for?
3. **1:19.** In this passage, the midwives appear to be lying to Pharaoh to protect Hebrew mothers and their children. If lying is a sin, what justifies the statement of the midwives to Pharaoh? (Refer to CCC 2482–89 as you consider your answer.)
4. **1:22.** What forms does the sex-selection of infants take today? Even if sex-selection does not involve the killing of the unborn or newborn, how moral are current methods used to engineer the gender and other characteristics of one’s child? (Cf. CCC 2274–75.)

Chapter 2

For understanding

1. **2:3.** How was the basket made? For what other vessel is the same Hebrew term for basket used? What parallels does the use of this term imply?
2. **2:10.** To what kind of education does Moses’ adoption entitle him? What does the original form of Moses’ name probably mean, and what does it recall? With what does Hebrew tradition associate the name of Moses?
3. **2:15.** Where is Midian? To what person does the Bible trace the lineage of the Midianites? Where does Moses meet his future wife, and what pattern does that meeting continue?
4. **2:24.** What does the term “remembered” mean here? What does the expression imply? What did the covenant that God made with Abraham centuries earlier promise?

For application

1. **2:10–11.** How do you suppose an adopted child thinks about his birth family, either consciously or subconsciously? How might the attitudes change toward both the adoptive family and the natural family as the child grows? How does the fact that you are an adopted child of God affect your view of your human family?
2. **2:12–15.** How typical is Moses’ behavior of anyone who commits a crime? How might Moses’ behavior, wrong as it is, have fit in with God’s plan? As you reflect on your own past, how might God have used the wrongs you have done to accomplish his designs for you?
3. **2:20.** When Reuel asks “Why?” for what answer is he looking? What is such a question intended to accomplish? Where else in Scripture have you noticed the question “Why?”
4. **2:23–25.** Review the note to v. 24. Why does it seem to us that it takes God a long time to answer prayers for help? How does Moses’ upbringing, escape from Egypt, and lengthy stay in Midian accord with God’s timing? What does that suggest in regard to your own prayers for help?

Chapter 3

For understanding

1. **3:2.** What is a “theophany”? What does Moses’ encounter with the Lord anticipate? Of what can fire be a sign? According to St. Gregory of Nyssa, what allegorical significance does the burning bush have in relation to the Blessed Virgin?
2. **3:8.** What does the expression “flowing with milk and honey” indicate about the land of Canaan? Who were the Canaanites?
3. **3:14.** What does the name “I AM WHO I AM” reveal about God? What philosophical truth does it express? How is it made visible? What historical truth does the name express? How does Jesus lay claim to divinity in the fourth Gospel?
4. **3:15.** What is the name YHWH called? What does it mean? When devout Jews come to the divine name in Scripture, what do they do? Is Jehovah one of God’s sacred names?
5. **3:18.** What is the primary goal of the Exodus? What is Moses requesting of Pharaoh at this point in the story?

For application

1. **3:5.** The expression “holy ground” is often used loosely to refer to places of special, though not necessarily religious, importance. In Moses’ case, what makes the ground holy? What does it mean for a place or a thing to be holy in a religious sense? What should one’s attitude be toward such places and things?
2. **3:10–11.** Since Moses was raised among Egyptian nobility, and it has been many years since he fled Egypt, why do you think Moses balks at God’s commission? When have you hesitated at taking on a large responsibility, and why?
3. **3:15.** In June 2008, the Holy See issued a directive that the name of God revealed in the tetragrammaton YHWH is not to be pronounced in the Catholic liturgy. What motivated the directive? (CCC 209 provides a clue.) Since the liturgy itself never uses the divine name that way, what would be affected?
4. **3:19.** It is fairly common for human beings not to respond to God “unless compelled by a mighty hand”. Critical life circumstances sometimes “compel” us to turn to God. How have you been forced by circumstance to turn to God after resisting him?

Chapter 4

For understanding

1. **4:10.** What do the Hebrew and Greek renditions of “I am not eloquent” indicate about Moses? How does Paul apply this passage to himself? What has the expression “slow of speech” been taken to mean?
2. **4:21.** In the course of the upcoming plague narratives, who hardens Pharaoh’s heart? Inasmuch as Pharaoh hardens his own heart before God intervenes, what two things are we led to see? As a metaphor, what does divine “hardening” most likely describe?
3. **4:22.** How is Israel God’s “first-born son”? What is implied in this relationship? How does God show his loving fatherhood to Israel in the Book of Exodus?
4. **Word Study: Serve (4:23).** To what or whom can the action of the Hebrew verb for “work” or “serve” be directed? In connection with God, what sense does the word have? How do the early chapters of Exodus build tension with this term?

For application

1. **4:1–9.** How good an evangelist do you think you are? How successfully do you witness to your faith? On what criteria do you judge yourself? What would it take for the Holy Spirit to convince you otherwise?
2. **4: 11–15.** God aims to convince Moses to trust him in advance of the situations he is to face with Pharaoh, but Moses keeps trying to get out of the mission. How do you prepare to meet situations you dread? Do you try to grow in trust, or do you try to excuse yourself?
3. **4:24–26.** Review the note for these verses. Since a covenant establishes a family bond, what are some of the likely consequences when the covenant is neglected? How is covenant *neglect* different from outright covenant *breakage*? How are they similar?

Chapters 5–6

For understanding

1. **5:1–9.** What questions are at issue in this initial confrontation between Pharaoh and Moses?
2. **5:5.** To what word is the Hebrew verb for “make them rest” related? What contrast does it suggest?

3. **6:3.** Along with the Hebrew name *'El Shadday*, what names of God were used in patriarchal times? Since the name YHWH was revealed to Moses, what are some ways that scholars have tried to account for its mention in Genesis?
4. **6:6.** What does the Hebrew term for “redeem” mean? What part does Yahweh play?

For application

1. **5:2, 4.** Pharaoh claims he does not know the Lord and will not relax his work orders. How does this attitude show itself in modern business practices? What is the role of work for those who do “know the Lord”?
2. **5:22–23.** Moses complains to God that the situation has gotten worse and God has done nothing. Why do you think some bad situations must become worse before they can improve? What examples come to mind? How appropriate do you think it is to complain to God under such circumstances?
3. **6:2–8.** The Lord replies by reminding Moses about who God is and about his covenant promises; he then tells Moses to resume his mission. Does this answer to Moses parallel your own experience of prayer? What does it suggest about perseverance in prayer?
4. **6:9–12, 30.** Moses tries to obey the Lord but suffers a setback when his own people refuse to listen to him. As you pursue a plan, how do you respond to setbacks? What advantages might setbacks and obstacles actually provide for you?

Chapter 7

For understanding

1. **7:10.** What does changing a rod into a serpent signify? Of what was the snake an emblem for Egyptians? How did St. Ephrem understand the allegorical significance of Moses’ staff?
2. **7:14—12:36.** On a literal level, how are the ten plagues grouped, both in terms of their occurrence and of the warnings given? On a historical level, how satisfactory is the claim that the plagues have some affinities with natural calamities known to afflict the Nile Valley? How does Exodus portray them? On a theological level, how does Exodus reverse the creative actions mentioned in Gen 1:1–31?
3. **Chart: Plagues of Egypt.** In addition to the mighty acts of judgment on the land of Egypt, what is God doing beneath the surface? Which gods of Egypt appear to be targeted in specific plagues?
4. **7:20.** What does the plague on the Nile seem to envision? What considerations can be said to support this? What does the horrific quantity of blood recall?

For application

1. **7:3–4.** What are miracles intended to show? How is it that, even when presented with clearly miraculous events, some people persist in trying to find a non-religious explanation? If you have had a conversion experience, what brought about your change of mind or heart?
2. **7:7.** The narrative digresses here to mention Moses’ and Aaron’s ages when they speak to Pharaoh. What is the biblical attitude toward the relations between younger people and their elders? How does it compare or contrast with modern attitudes toward older people?
3. **7:11.** “Secret arts” might also be called *occult* arts. Why does Scripture forbid their use? What spiritual dangers are attached to occult activity? (Refer to CCC 2117.)

Chapter 8

For understanding

1. **8:19.** What does the expression “finger of God” symbolize? What turning point does the magicians’ acknowledgment mark? Allegorically, what does the finger of God represent?
2. **8:20–32.** How does Pharaoh’s resistance begin to weaken in this fourth plague? What restrictions does he impose? What will finally force him to comply with Yahweh’s demands?
3. **8:22.** How does the Lord single out Israel in this fourth plague? How is his shielding grace either implied or stated explicitly in the remaining plagues?
4. **8:26.** What attitude of the Egyptians toward flocks and herds explains Moses’ insistence on conducting the Israelite liturgy in the wilderness? What conclusion would seem to follow from this regarding the festival of sacrifice? What assumption about Israel likely underlies this conclusion?

For application

1. **8:9.** What point do you think Moses is trying to make by asking Pharaoh to tell him when he (Pharaoh) wants the frogs to disappear? How appropriate is it to “test God” in this way when you have a concern about which you are praying? (Compare your answer with CCC 2119.)
2. **8:15.** Pharaoh changes his mind when he sees that there is relief from the plague of frogs. Have you ever “made a deal” with God? What was the outcome? Did you fulfill your end of the bargain, or did you try to change its terms?
3. **8:26.** Christian religious practices can sometimes appear either abominable or at least distasteful to non-Christians; for example, pagans once thought that the Eucharist involved cannibalism, and that objection is sometimes still heard. How would you explain the difference between consuming the Body and Blood of Jesus and cannibalism? (Hint: Is Jesus, whom you receive, living or dead?)

Chapters 9–10

For understanding

1. **9:16.** What do the plagues display to the Egyptians? What is their intended effect? Why does God spare Pharaoh’s life?
2. **9:27.** Though Pharaoh admits that he has sinned, what is his real interest?
3. **10:22.** What does the “thick darkness” seem to imply? To what natural occurrence do some think it refers?
4. **10:26.** What is Moses’ understanding of the rites and requirements of liturgy? What determines divine worship?

For application

1. **9:17a.** The Lord accuses Pharaoh of exalting himself. Have you ever experienced the Lord’s correction of your pride? How did the correction occur? What did you do in response? Did the correction have any long-term effect?
2. **10:21–23.** The ninth plague consists of three days of physical darkness. Of what does moral darkness consist? What is the difference between moral and spiritual darkness?
3. **10:26.** Review the note for this verse. How might it apply to the Church’s understanding of liturgy today?

Chapters 11–12

For understanding

1. **Essay: The Date of the Exodus.** Why is the date of the Exodus difficult to establish? What two main dates have been proposed? What are the most important arguments for putting the Exodus in the fifteenth century B.C.? What are the arguments for putting the Exodus in the thirteenth century B.C.? What are the principal strengths of the two alternatives?
2. **12:1–28.** What does the institution of the feasts of Passover and of Unleavened Bread memorialize, and how? What is the typological significance of the feast of Passover? What allegorical interpretation do St. Melito of Sardis and St. Thomas Aquinas give this feast?
3. **12:37.** What might the total population of Israel have been if the figure of 600,000 men is given? Though many find a literal reading of this number hard to accept, what other passages in Scripture corroborate it?
4. **12:46.** What is a possible explanation for preparing the paschal lamb without breaking a bone? How did Jesus meet this requirement? Allegorically, what does the Passover foretell?

For application

1. **11:8.** Moses leaves the presence of Pharaoh “in hot anger”. When, in the Gospels, does Jesus become angry? How can anger serve the purposes of God? What are some of this emotion’s dangers?
2. **12:2.** Review the note for this verse. In what ways does the modern calendar mimic the structure of the Israelite calendar? Why does the Catholic liturgical calendar begin with Advent?
3. **12:14.** Just as the Passover feast is a memorial, so the Mass is a memorial of the Christian Passover. What is the meaning of the word “memorial” in each case?
4. **12:42.** The Christian calendar also has a “night of watching”. What is it? What is the Christian “night of watching” intended to celebrate?

Chapter 13

For understanding

1. **13:2.** What does “consecrate” mean in the Bible? What does the consecration of the first-born sons of Israel entail? How does the note support this interpretation? What significant “change” will take place between Passover night and Israel’s entrance into Canaan?
2. **13:9.** What Jewish practice did this verse inspire?
3. **13:18.** If the term “Red Sea” comes from the Greek translation, what name does the Hebrew translation give this body of water? What are some possible locations for the crossing?
4. **13:21.** Where will the pillar of cloud and fire take the Israelites? How does Isaiah interpret this guiding presence? Allegorically, what does the cloud foreshadow?

For application

1. **13:2.** To *consecrate* something is to set it apart as holy. In what sense does your Baptism consecrate you? How might your actions be used to consecrate your environment? (Refer to CCC 901.)
2. **13:9, 16.** Although Christians do not customarily wear phylacteries, what ways do you have of reminding yourself on a daily basis of the word of God? How do you call this word to mind for yourself and your family? What is the role of religious objects, such as images and rosaries?
3. **13:10.** What is the role of religious anniversaries in the Christian life? What function does the liturgical calendar serve? (Refer to CCC 1168–71.)
4. **13:18.** God did not lead the chosen people by the most direct route to their destination; rather, he chose a roundabout way. Why does God often seem to lead people by indirect routes to the place where he wants them to be? How might an apparently indirect route turn out to be the most direct in the long run? Have you ever experienced this?

Chapters 14–15

For understanding

1. **14:21–29.** According to Paul’s interpretation of the sea crossing, what does Baptism do? What does the sea represent allegorically? What two reasons support this interpretation?
2. **15:1–18.** What is the Song at the Sea? How does it hail Yahweh? What dual perspective does it adopt?
3. **15:17.** How can the terms “mountain” and “place” refer to the land of Canaan? To which mountain are the terms more often read as direct references? Either way, to what do these destinations correspond?
4. **15:20.** Who is Miriam? Of what is she a type? How is she a prophetess? Who are some of the other prophetesses in the Bible?
5. **15:23.** What is the wordplay in Hebrew relating to the waters of Marah? Allegorically, what do these waters prefigure, according to Tertullian?

For application

1. **14:13–14.** What are the spiritual dangers in the emotion of fear? What are you most inclined to fear in your spiritual life? How might Moses’ command to stand firm apply to you?
2. **14:22–23, 30.** If Israel went into the parted sea by faith, what motive animated the Egyptians? As a result, what (in addition to the water) actually killed the Egyptians? What motives for action are likely to be lethal to your spiritual life?
3. **15:2–3.** How would you describe the attitude to the Lord in these verses? How does it compare to your own? How do song, praise, and exaltation enter your prayer life?
4. **15:23–24.** How did the people’s attitude change a mere three days later? Have alternations between exaltation and desolation affected your own prayer life? How can you prepare yourself to deal with changes like these before they happen?

Chapters 16–17

For understanding

1. **16:4.** What is manna? How is manna known in Scripture? Recalling this provision in the desert, how does Jesus apply it to himself? According to the three manna commandments, what must Israel do with it? In a moral sense, what does the spoiling of the manna teach us?

2. **17:6.** What does the action of striking the rock accomplish? What is the Jewish tradition about the rock? What does the rock signify for Paul?
3. **17:7.** What do the names Massah and Meribah mean? What warning does the whole event give us?
4. **17:12.** What do Aaron and Hur do during the battle with Amalek? How does Justin Martyr understand this action allegorically?

For application

1. **16:2–3.** What form does the murmuring of the people take? What does murmuring or grumbling against leaders of a community accomplish among its members? What kind of a spirit does it engender?
2. **16:17–18, 32–34.** One definition of a miracle is a provision from God that arrives at the time and in the amount needed. Have you ever experienced such a “miracle”? What effect has it had on your faith? Why take steps to remember it?
3. **17:7.** According to this verse, for what answer are the people looking by “put[ting] the Lord to the test”? Such “testing” is a common problem in prayer. What does it say about one’s attitude toward God? What is the antidote to such an attitude?
4. **17:10–12.** What lesson can this episode teach about intercessory prayer? What does it say about the help of spiritual companions?

Chapters 18–19

For understanding

1. **18:13–27.** What is the effect of Moses’ delegation of judicial authority to competent tribesmen? What legal system are they using?
2. **19:6.** What national vocation do the declarations at Sinai designate for Israel? Theologically, what significance does Israel’s relational identity as the “first-born” of Yahweh have? Where does the pattern of royal-priestly service recur in Scripture? How is the vocation of Israel finally and fully realized?
3. **19:15.** What does Moses’ command not to go near a woman anticipate? Why command temporary sexual abstinence?
4. **19:16–25.** What does the Sinai theophany reveal? Of what does it consist? What is its point?
5. **19:22.** Who, most likely, are the priests here? When is the Levitical family of Aaron ordained?

For application

1. **18:13–23.** What are some of the advantages for leaders and managers in delegating authority to others? What are the advantages for those under authority?
2. **19:10–11.** The Lord tells Moses to have the people ready themselves for their encounter with the Lord. What spiritual and physical preparations do you make before attending the Sunday liturgy? Why would the Lord have the people wash their clothes beforehand? What does your manner of dress indicate about your attitude toward the Lord and the liturgy?
3. **19:16.** How does the divine liturgy attempt to suggest the majesty and holiness of God? What sights, sounds, and smells point in that direction? How does the architecture of your church building convey or distract from a sense of God’s holiness?
4. **19:21.** Christians often think of God as very near, even within the heart; but this verse suggests that a certain distance is appropriate. Why would that be so? How might it be spiritually unhealthy to assume too great a familiarity with God?

Chapter 20

For understanding

1. **20:1—23:33.** Of the two law codes that stipulate the terms of the Sinai covenant, what does the Decalogue express? What does it reiterate? What is the Covenant Code?
2. **20:4.** What does the first commandment prohibit? What does the coming of Jesus as the true “image” of God introduce? What justifies making images of Jesus and of angels and saints?
3. **20:8–11.** What does the third commandment require? Why is the day set apart? What two factors underlie the shift from Saturday to the Lord’s day for Christians? How far back can Sunday worship be traced?
4. **20:13.** What does the fifth commandment forbid? How is that distinct from death that results from war, self-defense, or capital punishment? Why does Scripture insist that human life is sacred?

For application

1. **20:5.** What does it mean to say that God is “jealous”? How is his divine jealousy similar to jealousy in human relationships? How is it unlike human jealousy?
2. **20:8–11.** Why should Sunday be considered the Lord’s day and not simply a day off work? What do you do to honor the Lord’s day? Why is participation at Mass obligatory for Christians under pain of grave sin? (Refer to CCC 2176, 2180–83.)
3. **20:12.** Why does the fourth commandment come with a promise “that your days may be long in the land”? What personal benefits result from honoring one’s parents? How do those benefits affect the rest of society?
4. **20:18–20.** How does the attitude of the Israelites toward God contrast with the modern cultural attitude toward him? What does “fear of the Lord” mean to you? How should it affect the way you live your life?

Chapters 21–22

For understanding

1. **21:2.** What was the attitude in ancient Israel toward slavery? What do the laws given by Yahweh aim to accomplish? What does the presence of slave laws in the Bible mean?
2. **21:24.** What does the law of retaliation require, and what does it impose? How does Jesus temper it?
3. **22:3.** Why is killing a daytime burglar illegal?
4. **22:25.** The law forbids usury on loans to whom? Was this prohibition common in other countries? How does Deuteronomy regulate usury?

For application

1. **21:17.** A *curse* may be defined as calling upon God to bring harm to another person. Which of the Ten Commandments does it violate? How grave a sin is it? Why would Moses impose the death penalty for cursing one’s father or mother?
2. **22:9.** What harm does a breach of trust do to a community? Have you ever been affected by a breach of trust? How can such a breach be repaired?
3. **22:16–17.** Why do you think virginity was considered important in one’s prospective spouse in biblical times? What seems to be the popular attitude toward virginity today, and what do you think it should be? What virtue protects one’s sexual integrity?
4. **22:28.** What is blasphemy? According to CCC 2148, to what does the prohibition against blasphemy extend? Why is it wrong to revile the Church?

Chapters 23–24

For understanding

1. **23:1–9.** What do these verses both prohibit and promote in the courtroom? In what ways can justice be denied a petitioner?
2. **23:14–17.** Which three liturgical festivals are required, and when?
3. **23:31.** What are the parameters of the Promised Land? To what do these parameters correspond?
4. **24:5.** Who, most likely, are the “young men” referred to in this verse? What are the burnt offerings? What are peace offerings?
5. **24:8.** What does splashing blood on the altar and on the people signify? Beyond this, how else can one interpret the blood of the sacrifice? What status does the ceremony mark? How does Jesus evoke memories of the Sinai covenant?

For application

1. **23:20–21.** What does the Church teach about belief in guardian angels? (Refer to CCC 335–36.) How seriously do you personally take that belief? What difference can the presence of an angel in your life make to your pursuit of holiness?
2. **23:29–30.** God promises to blot out Israel’s enemies, not all at once, but little by little. Have you observed that pattern in your attempts to conquer your faults, failings, and habitual sins? Why might it be good for you that your worst faults are eradicated only little by little rather than all at once?

3. **24:7.** The Israelites promise to hear and obey the word of the Lord, mediated through Moses. To which of the moral teachings of the Church do you find it hardest to assent? How does an attitude of dissent undermine one's confidence in the word of God as mediated through the Magisterium?
4. **24:8.** At which point during the Mass do you hear the expression "blood of the covenant"? Into what covenant does Jesus bring you? Whereas Moses threw the blood of the sacrifice on the people, you drink the blood of the New Covenant. What is the significance of that action?

Chapter 25

For understanding

1. **25:1—31:18.** The Lord instructs Moses to build a Tabernacle to exacting specifications. What function does the sanctuary serve? In the divine economy, what lessons do the architecture and ministries of the Tabernacle teach? Structurally, what does the Mosaic tent resemble? Allegorically, of what is the Tabernacle a symbol?
2. **25:10.** What was the ark, and what were its dimensions? What was stored within it? What did Israel consider the golden lid and the winged cherubim to be? Allegorically, what does the ark represent? How is the length of a cubit measured?
3. **25:17.** What is the "mercy seat"? What does the Hebrew term define as its purpose?
4. **25:18.** What are the functions of the cherubim on top of the ark? What else did images of cherubim cover? What might they have looked like?
5. **25:40.** With what does Moses' vision provide him? What were the earthly sanctuaries of Israel made to represent?

For application

1. **25:8.** God appeals to the generosity of the Israelites to build him a suitable sanctuary in their midst. Where does God most desire to have a sanctuary in our midst? What kind of generosity does this sanctuary require?
2. **25:10–15.** What do you think was the point of overlaying the ark and the poles with pure gold? Given these decorations and the contents of the ark (see the note for v. 10), the ark must have been heavy. What significance might be attached to its weight?
3. **25:16, 21.** The contents of the ark are called the "covenant" in these verses. What was this? How do relics and sacred images testify to God's action in the Church's life? Which of these speak most clearly to you?
4. **25:31–37.** Why are candles used in liturgical celebrations? What does the light of the Easter candle signify? Why does the baptismal liturgy require that a lit candle be presented to the newly baptized? (Refer to CCC 1189, 1243.)

Chapters 26–27

For understanding

1. **26:1.** What was the "tabernacle"? How was it designed and built? Of what were the Levites in charge?
2. **26:31.** What function did the veil serve in the Tabernacle, and how was it hung? As a fabric partition, for whom did it serve as a barricade, and who was allowed to pass through?
3. **27:1.** What was the shape of the altar? How was it constructed? For what was it used?
4. **27:9.** How large was the courtyard that surrounded the Tabernacle? What was used to fence it off? Who had access to this courtyard?

For application

1. **26:1–6.** The Tabernacle is an expression of God's presence among men (see also Rev 21:3). How is God present with you? What is his presence supposed to accomplish in you?
2. **26:33.** Just as the veil separated the holy place from the Holy of Holies, an icon screen separates the sanctuary (or "holy place") from the nave in Eastern Catholic Churches. How might the eye of faith view the icon screen as a symbol of the link between earth (symbolized by the nave) and the mystery of heaven (symbolized by the altar behind the screen), rather than as a separation between the two?
3. **27:1.** What is the function of the altar in a church building? How might the altar represent Christ himself? (Refer to CCC 1383.) During the liturgy of Baptism, what is the significance of bringing the newly baptized to the altar of the church?
4. **27:13.** Review the note for this verse. What is the significance of the Temple facing east? Why do liturgists prefer that the altar face east (*ad orientem*)?

Chapters 28–29

For understanding

1. **28:2.** Of what were the priestly vestments for the high priests made, and what did they cover? Of what did the vestments consist? What might be suggested by the fact that footwear is not mentioned?
2. **28:6.** What was the ephod? What did it look like? What did the two onyx stones on the shoulders represent, and what was engraved on them?
3. **28:41.** What is the literal translation of the Hebrew idiom for ordination? What are two debated meanings for it?
4. **29:1–35.** What happens during the rite of ordination for Aaronic priests? What are these actions meant to do?

For application

1. **28:2.** What are the vestments worn by a Catholic priest at Mass? Why does the priest wear such clothing during the liturgy? What do the main liturgical colors (white, green, red, purple or violet) represent?
2. **28:30.** Review the note for this verse. What methods do you use to discern the will of the Lord for your life? How does Scripture help you discern his will? How do you go about seeking direction from mature Christians?
3. **29:1ff.** How is the ordination of a Catholic priest or bishop different from simple election or installation? How is the priesthood of the faithful different from the ministerial priesthood of the ordained clergy? (Refer to CCC 1538, 1546–47.)
4. **29:20.** Review the note for this verse. During priestly ordination, the hands of the ordained are anointed with chrism. What does this action signify? What does the action of making the sign of the cross on your forehead, lips, and breast before the reading of the Gospel signify?

Chapters 30–31

For understanding

1. **30:1.** What was the altar of incense, and where was it placed? What did the smoke symbolize? Allegorically, what do the two altars of the Tabernacle signify?
2. **30:25.** Of what was the holy anointing oil made? For what was it used?
3. **31:1–11.** Who were the chief architects of the sanctuary? In what were they expert? What characterizes their engineering and artistic skills?
4. **31:18.** Why are there two sets of stone tablets inscribed with the Decalogue? Why were Near Eastern treaties sometimes written in duplicate?

For application

1. **30:7–8, 34–38.** Why is incense still used in liturgical worship? What is your own response to the liturgical use of incense? According to the note for v. 35, the legal code forbids the personal or domestic use of incense. Why might this use have been forbidden?
2. **30:11–15.** Canon Law (CIC 222, §1) requires Catholics to assist with the material needs of the Church. How much assistance is required? (Refer to CCC 2043.) What is your practice? How might tithing (giving 10 percent of your income) be a spiritually worthwhile model?
3. **30:25.** Just as the anointing oil used in the Tabernacle was perfumed oil for anointing the Tabernacle itself, the altar, and the priests, so chrism is an aromatic oil used for dedicating churches, altars, and administering sacraments. What does chrism signify? (Refer to CCC 1183, 1241.) What is the symbolic link between the perfume of the oil and the Holy Spirit?
4. **31:12–16.** Review the note for v. 12. If the Sabbath can be traced back to the creation, to what can the Christian observance of the Lord's day (Sunday) be traced? How is observance of the Sunday obligation a sign of the New Covenant, and how does it sanctify you?

Chapter 32

For understanding

1. **32:4.** What are two possible ways of viewing the golden calf? Which interpretation is more likely, and why? What, according to the note, does the image represent?

2. **32:7.** What change in the Lord's attitude is indicated by his calling the Israelites "your people"? What idea does the verb "corrupted" in this verse seem to imply?
3. **32:32.** What does Moses offer to do? How does Paul show the same spirit of sacrifice? What idea is expressed by the words "your book"?
4. **Topical Essay: After the Golden Calf.** What laws, according to ancient Christian theology, were promulgated as a result of the calf debacle? What does it mean to say these laws constituted a "yoke" for Israel? What three considerations lend support to this ancient interpretation?

For application

1. **32:6.** Review the note for this verse. What similarities do you see between the conduct of the Israelites and that of today's culture? How have Christians been influenced by cultural moral trends? How have these trends affected your own life?
2. **32:11–13.** Moses intercedes for the chosen people, and his prayer is heard. How would you describe your practice of intercessory prayer? For example, does your prayer resemble that of Moses, who reminds God of his covenant oath? Has it seemed to you that your prayers have been heard?
3. **32:19.** Moses' anger "burns hot" when he sees what is happening. What is the moral difference between "hot" anger and "cold" anger? What is the difference between the anger shown by Moses and the anger that Jesus condemns in Mt 5:22? How can anger be used in a positive and virtuous way?
4. **32:22–24.** Aaron, who had been left in charge of the people, tries to minimize his own responsibility for the people's sin. How do you respond when someone calls you to account for your actions?

Chapter 33

For understanding

1. **33:7–11.** What contrast does this narrative aside bring to the reader's attention? What best explains the change in Moses' relationship with Yahweh?
2. **33:7.** What was the "tent of meeting"? For what did Moses use it? Where was it located?
3. **33:12–17.** What does Moses protest in his exchange with the Lord? What does it mean to say that Moses has the "heart of a mediator"? What are Yahweh's words designed to do?
4. **33:20 and 33:23.** How is the experience of Christ unlike that of Moses? What are the angels and saints granted through Christ? Why, according to St. Cyril of Jerusalem, does God assume the face of humanity in Jesus? Since God does not possess a physical body, why is anthropomorphic imagery used in the Bible?

For application

1. **33:3, 5.** Review the note for 32:9. How might the appellation "stiff-necked" apply to people's behavior today? What virtue or virtues are in contrast to stiff-necked behavior? When have your own attitudes to God been stiff-necked?
2. **33:4.** The people mourn when God threatens not to go up to the Promised Land with them. When God corrects us, what is an appropriate response? How is mourning for sin appropriate? To what should it lead?
3. **33:16.** How would God's going with his people into the Promised Land make them distinct from all other peoples? What does it mean for God to go with us in our daily lives? Contrariwise, what does it mean for us to go with God?
4. **33:19.** Is there anyone to whom the Lord is not gracious or refuses to show mercy? When God seems to withhold grace or mercy from someone, who is at fault? Why might someone fail to receive grace or mercy from an all-good God?

Chapter 34

For understanding

1. **34:6–7.** What does the proclamation of God's name signify? What character attributes are listed here?
2. **Word Study: Merciful Love (34:6).** What various meanings does the Hebrew word *hesed* have? In the sphere of human relations, what obligation does *hesed* impose? As an inner requirement of the covenant between Yahweh and Israel, what does God expect from Israel, and how does God show his commitment? Of what NT doctrine is the revelation of *hesed* the OT foundation?
3. **34:10–26.** In the renewal of the Sinai covenant, what do its terms abbreviate? Which law has been noticeably added? What is the effect of God's speaking only to Moses rather than to the people?

4. **34:29.** To what does the Hebrew expression for “his face shone” refer? Why does the Latin Vulgate say Moses’ face was horned? What description by the evangelist Matthew recalls this episode?

For application

1. **34:7.** What does it mean in practice for the iniquity of the fathers to be “visited” on their children down to the third and fourth generation? Can you think of some examples of this? How is this “visitation” offset by fathers who turn away from their iniquity?
2. **34:12–16.** Why does God warn the chosen people to be careful not to make a covenant with the inhabitants of the Promised Land? For example, why is it dangerous to take a spouse who worships other gods? How might this warning apply to Christians who marry persons of non-Christian religions or of no religion at all?
3. **34:29.** When a person has an intense experience of human or divine love, how might his face change? Has this experience happened to you or someone you know? How long did the change of expression last?
4. **34:33.** Review the note for this verse. According to 2 Cor 3:18, what happens to those who behold the Lord “with unveiled face”? Have you experienced Paul’s interpretation of the veil in your relationship with the Lord?

Chapters 35–39

For understanding

1. **35:1—40:33.** What do these chapters describe? In terms of composition, what effect does the repetition of the sanctuary laws have?
2. **38:21.** Of what are the Levites in charge here? How did they earn this right?
3. **39:43.** Why would Moses inspect the framework and fixtures of the Tabernacle? Why did Moses bless the people?

For application

1. **35:5ff.** Moses appeals to the people’s generosity in collecting the materials needed for the building of the Tabernacle. If you have ever been involved in the design and building or renovation of a church, in what ways did members of the parish become involved? How can such a process draw the parish community together?
2. **36:8ff.** How can the art and architecture of a church building either enhance or distract from sacred worship? What forms of art have the greatest influence on you? (Refer to CCC 2502.)
3. **38:24–31.** These verses provide some scriptural warrant for the use of extravagant amounts of gold, silver, precious metals and stones, and other valuables in the worship of God. Despite the criticism of some, what is the spiritual benefit of such extravagance? What does Mt 26:6–13 contribute to your understanding?

Chapter 40

For understanding

1. **40:33.** What in Exodus might suggest that the Tabernacle is a miniature replica of the universe? How does the number seven figure into all this?
2. **40:34.** After Yahweh descends from the heights of Sinai into the hiddenness of the sanctuary, what function does the Tabernacle serve? What parallels point to this connection between the mountain and the sacred tent?
3. **40:35.** How does the Greek LXX describe the cloud? How does the New Testament make use of this expression in connection with Mary and Peter, James, and John?

For application

1. **40:1–11.** Have you ever witnessed the dedication of a church building? What are some of the similarities between this description and the dedication of a church—particularly the anointing of the walls and the altar? What is the purpose of the dedication of a church?
2. **40:34.** What is the meaning of the expression “the glory of the Lord”, which is often used in Scripture? How might you recognize it in your own relationship with God? What effect is the glory of the Lord intended to have on those who have the privilege of seeing it?
3. **40:35–38.** What does the image of a cloud suggest about the presence of God? Although God is light (cf. 1 Jn 1:5), how might the cloud suggest a kind of darkness in the human mind? For example, what do we know about God, and what do we not know about him?