



Never Again Means Never Again



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On May 19th, Catholics celebrated the culminating event of their Easter season: Pentecost, the birthday of their one Holy and Apostolic Church.

Fifty days after Jesus Christ's resurrection, the apostles were gathered in one place when the sound of a rushing wind came from above. Tongues of fire appeared and dispersed atop their heads. They became filled with the Holy Spirit.

The apostles were moved to evangelize to Gentiles and Jews from all regions. This was possible since they were given the gift of tongues, speaking in a way understood by all as the people heard the good news in their native tongues.

Few know that the first Pentecost was when God appeared as a dense cloud on Mount Sinai, the same mountain where He had appeared as a burning bush to Moses. God gave Moses the Ten Commandments on the mountain. After that, he came down and continued leading the Jews on an Exodus from Egypt to their promised land.

Most understand that the recognition of the historical Jesus as the true savior is what splits the Jewish and Catholic religions. However, Pentecost, along with prior prophecies, solidifies both groups' belief and commitment to the Judeo-Christian Tradition. At the highest level, Christians and Jews share the same God and a shared Bible.

These events demonstrate that while each group's beliefs and subsequent practices are starkly different, each sect stands by and supports each other. Each sect believes it is chosen. Each shares the Ten Commandments, which guides them with a sense of order that has sustained them for centuries, even while subjected to persecution.

These commandments are reasonable and useful as their guidance must be one of the best formulas for creating and sustaining a civil society. While difficult to follow, it is hard to argue that these are Draconian rules. In fact, they are guidelines given by a loving and just God that, if followed, will lead to human flourishing and a just society. Note that their reasonableness has not been trumped by any edicts mankind has cooked up since. This testifies to the fact that these commandments are not an external imposition of unreasonable demands but rather a revelation of behavior that is good, true and just for humans and society.

As with the Ten Commandments, the adherence to the Jewish and Catholic bond is not a pick-and-choose relationship; it is non-negotiable. It is a de facto expectation.

Understandably, those outside these two religions take umbrage when hearing that these two groups claim to be chosen and allowed to gain exceptionality in thought, word and deed.

A Christian seder, as is held on the Roman Catholic's Holy Thursday night, re-enacts in readings and reflection what the Jews prayerfully do during their

Passover. While few Catholic families and groups conduct a Christian seder, they come to learn the historical, and later socio-cultural, and at times political elements of their Judeo-Christian heritage.

God's providence was shown first to the Jews and then to Christians. God chose the Jewish people as "His people." But history has not been kind to the Jews. This is attested to by their annual day of remembrance, Tisha B'Av.

Today, we are witnessing another assault on the Jewish people, an assault that is not too distant from the Holocaust, which ended 80 years ago. Christians, and especially Catholics, are called to stand in solidarity with the Jewish people, who are our spiritual older brothers, as Pope John Paul II said.

American Catholics share a similar view with the Jewish people that the Founding of America was not merely a man-made and unprecedented grand governing structure experiment; many believe it was Providential! From the beginning of this country up to today, many nations and people work covertly, and now more openly, for the demise of a great nation.

American Catholics, among all Americans, should have the strongest commitment to stand by Israel and guard against another exile or extermination. The post-Holocaust demand "never again" is being put to the test again.

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