

Daily Summary

Day 51: Leviticus 17–19:18; Psalm 44:17–26

Note to Parents: There is a bit in this passage about not “uncovering the nakedness” of any family members. This is all pretty innocuous and we read it to our children and taught it as a good lesson for modesty. There is a mention in Leviticus 18:19–23 about a woman’s menstruation, as well as the command not to lie with a beast, or men not lying with men. We read these passages to our kids without incident.

Think about all the laws God is giving them before they go to the Promised Land. At the end of Chapter 18, God says if the Israelites do all these unclean things, the Promised Land will “vomit” them out! (Lev 18:28). The things God is warning them against are the very things that the people in the land right now are doing. These people are called the Canaanites and because they are practicing these wicked things God is going to throw them out so the Israelites can have the land. If the Israelites arrive in the Promised Land and act like Canaanites, God will throw them out too!

Something the Canaanites were doing was offering sacrifices to a false god named Molech who was represented by a goat. The type of sacrifice they would offer was a human sacrifice, they would burn their own babies to Molech! How could someone do that? These fake gods are demons. By giving Israel these laws of worship which involve killing goats, God is preparing them to sacrifice goats so they don’t get into the Promised Land and begin worshipping these goat demons! They had to sacrifice goats to show them they are not gods. He is trying to teach them not to worship these things. If Israel decides to do the things the Canaanites did, God will drive them out of the land as well.

Discussion Questions:

- God is trying to warn them about proper behavior when they get to the Promised Land. Based on Israel’s history of disobeying God so far in the story, do you think they will listen?
- God warns them about sin before they fall into it. How do your parents imitate God and try to warn you about trouble before you get into it? Do you always listen?
- God wants us to be holy like him. How do you think God is going to make that possible? Can we really be holy like God?

Catechism References
Day 51: Leviticus 17–19:18; Psalm 44:17–26

Shedding the animals' blood in the sacrifice was a reminder that because of sin, life is lost ([CCC, 2260](#)). This is a common theme throughout the Old Testament. Blood is a sign of life and sin is the root of all loss of life in the history of mankind.

Daily Summary

Day 52: Leviticus 19:19–21; Psalm 45

Note to Parents: There is a bit in this passage about a man who lies carnally with a woman (Lev 19:20) as well as making one's daughter a harlot (Lev 19:29). There is also a line about not committing adultery (Lev 20:10) and men lying with men and beasts (20:13–16). There are more admonitions against uncovering the nakedness of family members (20:17–20). There is a mention about "playing the harlot" (Lev 21:7, 9). You can gingerly skip around these passages fairly easily and simply move on to the next admonition.

Discipline and order: a theme in the book of Leviticus. We see this play out in all the relationships the Israelites are supposed to have and in the way they are supposed to treat their bodies. Did you notice all the instructions even about how the men are to keep their beards in Leviticus 21? God's people are instructed to listen to God in every aspect of their lives so they learn to set themselves apart from the other nations and humble themselves in obedience to God.

Being unlike the other nations is not just being snobbish or unfriendly. Did you catch what the people from the other nations were doing? Leviticus 20 commands that no one can offer their children as a sacrifice to Molech. Who even needs to be told, "Don't murder your children!" Apparently, the Israelites need to be told this because they will be dwelling among people who actually do this horrible thing. Not to spoil the plot, but we will see later in the Bible that some Israelites are in fact doing this horrendous thing and incurring the wrath of God for it. If you haven't gotten the idea yet that sin is a really big problem, you will by the time we are done reading the Old Testament. It gets really bad!

But God issues commands to save them from these evils and to teach them to be disciplined and ordered and holy. He does love us, even when do unthinkable things.

Discussion Questions:

- Psalm 45 describes the beauty of the King's bride as she enters his chamber for the wedding. Do you know one of the days we pray this song in the Mass? At the feast of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary. Why do you think that is?
- What do you think life would have been like as a child if you were worried your parents might sacrifice you to the demon Molech? How glad must the Israelite children be for the book of Leviticus?

Catechism References
Day 52: Leviticus 19:19–21:24

When we say “Hallowed be thy name” in the Lord’s prayer, we acknowledge his holiness, and through this passage (Leviticus 20:26) we see his desire to extend his holiness to his people. The gift of Baptism incorporates humanity into the holiness of God ([CCC, 2813](#)).

Daily Summary
Day 53: Leviticus 22–23; Psalm 46

Israel's liturgical calendar is divided into two: feasts in the Spring and feasts in the Fall. There are no feasts in the winter or the summer. Why? It is either too cold or too hot. The feasts are connected to the two major harvests: the harvest of grain in the Spring and the harvest of grapes in the Fall. The major sacrifices of the year involve making bread from the grain and wine from the grapes. It is from April-May that you have the feast of Passover and you have the feast of Unleavened Bread. You have to take all the leaven out of your house. Leaven makes the bread get big. Leaven is like sin. You put a little sin and it grows. Getting rid of the leaven teaches us to get rid of sin. After Passover and Unleavened Bread, you have the feast of Bickerim: first fruits. After that, you have the feast of Pentecost. So after 50 days, you get the fullness of the harvest. In the New Testament, Jesus rises from the dead and then 50 days later the full fruit of the Spirit comes upon on the apostles.

In the Fall you have Shopherim. Then you have the Day of Atonement. You prepare for nine days and then the priest goes into the Tent of Meeting where the Ark dwells. He goes into the Holy of Holies. He can only go there once a year. From the feast of Trumpets to Atonement is a week of penance and fasting. Trumpets reminds us of God's coming judgment. Then there is a big celebration called the Feast of Booths for eight days. It was a huge celebration!

Discussion Questions:

- The liturgical calendar is important in the Catholic faith as well! What are your favorite feast days and times of year in the Church?
- Why does God connect the major feast days with sacrifice and worship? How does this teach them to trust in God if they have to offer a portion of their harvest in sacrifice?
- How can we give God something of the many gifts he gives to us when we go to worship? Your parents probably donate money when you go to Mass. What can you give to God?

Daily Summary
Day 54: Leviticus 24–25; Psalm 47

In this reading, we see a man get stoned for blaspheming and cursing God’s name. Why did they stone him for profaning God’s name? God’s name is holy! This is not only true for the Old Testament, but still is true today. In the New Covenant, it is still a mortal sin to take the Lord’s name in vain. It is spiritual death to take his name in vain. We must respect God’s name because if you don’t, you don’t really love him.

We also read about the Jubilee. The Jubilee is celebrated every 50 years in Israel. On this feast, everyone is free! All the debts you owe are forgiven. If you had to sell your house because you couldn’t pay your bills, you got to go back to your house. Jesus begins his ministry and proclaims good news to the poor. He proclaims liberty to captives and to set free those who are oppressed. Jesus announces a true Jubilee, freedom from the debts of our sins.

Discussion Questions:

- How do you think the world would be different if we practiced a Jubilee? How do you think this would help the poor?
- Do you think some people resist forgiving people of their debts because they place too high a value on money? In society, some people who have others owing them a great deal of money are very wealthy already. Do you think they would think it is fair to just forgive debts? Do God’s laws seem to prefer what is “fair” or what helps those who are struggling?
- How does the Jubilee year, where there is this over-abundance of generosity—almost to the point of not seeming fair—teach us about God’s forgiveness of sin? Do you think it is “fair” that we should be forgiven of sin, or do you think God is trying to show us that it is alright to not be fair if you are granting people liberty from what enslaves them?

Daily Summary
Day 55: Leviticus 26–27; Psalm 48

Congratulations! You have finished the book of Leviticus! Do you know that this is one of the books people find most challenging to read, and you have completed it!

In these ending chapters of Leviticus, we read about God’s commandment against idols. Do you think they listened to God and did not make any more idols to worship? No. This temptation to worship other gods is present throughout the Old Testament. They just cannot keep their hearts faithful to God alone.

We can summarize God’s way of teaching Israel by this: If you walk in God’s ways, you will be blessed. If you do not, then you will suffer. The true reward is neither land or food, but God himself, these material goods are just stepping stones while Israel spiritually matures. He is treating his people like little children, “If you are good, you will get treats. If you are bad, you will be punished.” In Christ, we will have to develop a mature spirituality: we are good not because we get something out of it, but we are good because we love God and we trust him that sin is bad for us.

Discussion Questions:

- Does your family have a similar reward system for good behavior? Perhaps younger children get a donut after Mass for behaving well during Church. Why do you think this is sometimes necessary for younger children?
- What did you think of the book of Leviticus? Did you learn anything new from it?
- God says in Leviticus 26:40 that if Israel confesses their sins and turn away from their iniquity, God will remember his covenant. Even in light of the sins Israel has committed, would you describe God as loving and merciful? How do even the punishments reveal God as a good Father?

Catechism References
Day 55: Leviticus 26–27; Psalm 48

“I will walk among you and I will be your God, and you shall be my people” (Leviticus 26:12). God himself is the inheritance promised to his people. Those in communion with him will share his glory, perfection, and will reign with him. God himself is the reward ([CCC, 2550](#)).

Daily Summary
Day 56: Numbers 1; Psalm 49

We are now in the book of Numbers. Why do you think it is called Numbers? We are going to see a great deal of numbering of the tribes as Moses takes a census of God's people. You might ask, "Do you really read the results of this entire census with your children? What benefit is it for them?" I think it is important to get a feel for the size of this group of people. It's big!

For example, the tribe of Reuben was 46,500 people. That is the size of an average baseball stadium full of people! That is just one of the twelve tribes. As we are seeing this nation wander through the desert, we need to, as accurately as possible, imagine this enormous crowd of people! And Moses is in charge of them all!

Discussion Questions:

- What are some difficulties that you can think of when traveling with a group that size?
- The Levites were not numbered in the census. Do you remember the job of the Levites in the nation of Israel?
- When the tribe of Judah is mentioned in verse 7, we see the names of Nahshon and Amminadab. Have you ever heard these names before? If not, consult Matthew 1. Why are these people important?

Catechism References
Day 56: Numbers 1; Psalm 49

Israel was called by God to be a “kingdom of priests and a holy nation.” Out of Israel, the tribe of Levi was set aside for priestly service in the liturgy ([CCC, 1539](#)).

Daily Summary

Day 57: Numbers 2–3:13; Psalm 50

So to sketch the picture of the encampment, we have the Tabernacle in the middle and the different tribes grouped together surrounding the Tabernacle, three on each of the four sides. Numbers describes how they are to be situated when they camp, and it also gives them the “marching orders” when they are on the move.

Interestingly, the tribes of Israel were arranged very much like an ancient war camp. The Egyptians, when they would go to war would arrange themselves in groups surrounding the pharaoh who they understood to be their king and one of their gods. That God instructed Israel to arrange themselves this way would have communicated two important things: 1) They were going to the Promised Land as if in battle and 2) God is their king.

You’ll notice that Numbers 2:17 speaks about the Levites being the ones “in the midst of the camp.” They are surrounding the Tabernacle. On the one hand, this makes practical sense since they are charged with all the duties relating to worship. Yet there is a symbolic element here too: the Levites act as a “buffer” between Israel and God. God is mediated to Israel through the Levites because of the sin of the Golden Calf.

The Psalm speaks of God speaking “from the rising of the sun to its setting.” Where have you heard that phrase before? The Psalm goes on to describe the perfect offering is not animals and sacrifices, but a sacrifice of thanksgiving. Do you know what the word “Eucharist” means? It means “thanksgiving.” In the Mass, the priest says, “from the rising of the sun to its setting, a perfect offering will be made.” Jesus makes the perfect offering, and God does indeed “deliver” and “glorify” him (Psalm 50:15).

Discussion Questions:

- The tribe of Judah is the tribe to lead the way when they march toward the Promised Land. Who is the first person to enter the true Promised Land of Heaven? What tribe is he from? What does that say about how carefully God has planned out salvation history?
- The Church is very organized too, isn’t it? We have a visible leader (the pope); bishops, priests, and deacons each with clearly defined roles. What does that say about the importance God places on order and organization for his people?

Catechism References
Day 57: Numbers 2–3:13; Psalm 50

God is the judge, and will issue his judgments in accordance with the Truth. All our deeds and their consequences will be revealed at the final judgment ([CCC, 1039](#)).

Daily Summary
Day 58: Numbers 3:14–4:20; Psalm 51

In Numbers 3, something rather conspicuous stands out in Numbers 3:43 when they number all the people. They listed the clans of the sons and all the male first born only totaled 22,273. If we look at the number of people that were counted in Numbers 2, there really should have been a lot more first-born sons. So what happened? We don't know for sure, but it stands to reason that not all the families celebrated the Passover and they lost their sons! Isn't that tragic? God gave them very clear and simple instructions but not everyone had enough faith in him to obey. In light of how Israel behaved in Exodus 32 with the Golden Calf, we can know with certainty that Israel had forgotten about God while they were in Egypt.

Psalm 51 should sound quite familiar! It is one of the most popular penitential prayers the Church prays. It was composed by David after he committed a series of very serious sins (we'll get into all those details later). This prayer has all the ingredients of the perfect way to say "I'm sorry." It acknowledges one's own sinfulness, it recognizes the mercy and steadfast love of God, and it resolves that the sinner "moves on" from his/her error and continues on praising God and teaching others about his love. Sometimes when we sin we just feel stuck and ashamed and distance ourselves from God. That is not how God wants us to handle sin. Whenever we sin, we should pray Psalm 51!

Discussion Questions:

- Why do you think some of the Israelites did not keep the Passover?
- The Levites were not numbered in the census. Do you remember the job of the Levites in the nation of Israel?
- Notice how carefully the sons of Kohath treated the sacred vessels used in the Tent of Meeting. What do you see at Church about how carefully the patens and chalices are treated by the priests? If you or anyone in your family is an altar server, how can this passage help them see the holiness of what they do by taking care of the sacred vessels?

Note to parents: There is some material in tomorrow's reading that deals with mature material. Please see the note which provides some details.

Catechism References
Day 58: Numbers 3:14–4:20; Psalm 51

Psalm 51

In this penitential psalm, the mercy of God is revealed. God created the world out of nothing. So too, can God give spiritual life to those who are dead to sin ([CCC, 298](#)).

God's deliverance of his people goes beyond their deliverance from physical bondage. The most important redemption God offers is to save people from their sin ([CCC, 431](#)). This takes place through the work of Christ who calls humanity to continual conversion. This is often times a long process of purification which requires repeated moments of repentance and saying to God that we are sorry ([CCC, 1428](#)).

The penitential person recognizes that outward signs of worship are not enough if the heart is not turned towards God. David begs God to create a clean heart in him. The prophets will take up this call that we love God with our hearts and express our love for him by loving our neighbor ([CCC, 2100](#)).

Daily Summary

Day 59: Numbers 4:21–5:31; Psalm 52

Note to parents: Numbers 5:11–22 deals with how to handle a situation in which a woman is suspected to have been unfaithful to her husband. The strongest of the phrases is “if a man lies with her carnally” (verse 12). The rest of the passage is pretty innocuous. We went ahead and just read them to our kids as they are. I don’t think they asked any questions, but I would have explained it: “If a woman was not faithful to her husband and spent time hugging or holding hands with another man...”

Certain groups of people had certain jobs pertaining to caring for the sanctuary as they traveled. The whole community has a role to play and each one was to do his task with care.

(This part of the reflection deals with the case of the woman suspected of being unfaithful. If you skipped that part, feel free to skip this paragraph). The bulk of this reading deals with what happens if a woman is accused of doing something wrong. They go through this elaborate ritual of having her swear an oath holding “holy water” in a bowl with dust from the floor of the tabernacle. She has to swear an oath to the Lord that she is innocent. If she is telling the truth nothing bad will happen to her, if she is lying she will get sick. The key idea here is that the Lord is the judge. If there were no witnesses to her supposed sin, she was not going to be punished. She would stand before God and let him judge her. This is quite merciful! She could not just be accused without evidence and be punished with prejudice. God who knows the truth judges her.

Discussion Questions:

- How do you think the different jobs performed by different groups help us understand the different roles in the Church? Not everyone sings in the choir, not everyone teaches the classes. Each person has different gifts and roles to fill. What do you think you are good at and how can you use that talent for the Lord?
- Every item in the Tent of Meeting was handled with care. What does that tell you about how we should treat the things in the Church? When we are young, you may not have something to take care of in the Church besides yourself. So how can you take the best care of yourself (your behavior, the way you dress) when you are in Church?

(There are no Catechism references for these passages)

Daily Summary

Day 60: Numbers 6:1–7:41; Psalm 53

In this passage we read about the Israelites making different kinds of sacrifice. Each man offered three different kinds of sacrifice: a sin offering, a peace offering, and a burnt offering. Why are all those three important?

A burnt offering was offered completely to God. It was burned up totally. That means that the Israelites had to completely give something up. How much of the animal is given up for a burnt offering? All of it. We have to offer “burnt offerings” in our own lives. We have to give everything to God and not hold anything back.

The next sacrifice is a sin offering. Some of it goes to God, some goes to the priest. The priest gets to keep some of the sin offering. This was how they were supported by the community.

What is different about a peace offering? What happens to the meat? When you make a peace offering, you get to eat some of it. You get to eat some of God’s food. You get to eat holy food. You are in communion, in peace, with God. This shows God is like our family. You eat with people you are closest to.

In a family you have to make sacrifices. Sometimes, you have let go of having your way or give something up completely. This is like a burnt offering. We have to learn to be detached from things. We can make a peace offering by spending time with others. Maybe playing a game with a younger sibling or helping a parent do a chore. You aren’t doing what you want to exactly, but you are doing it for the sake of communion with others.

How about a sin offering? This can be done by making “restitution” to someone when you do something wrong to them. You committed a sin against them, so after you say you are sorry, you want to “make up” the wrong you committed.

Discussion Questions:

- In Numbers 7:12 we read about Nashon the son of Amminadab. Do you recognize these names? If you don’t, turn to Matthew 1: 3 (that’s in the New Testament reading of Day 1 if you are using a Bible in a Year Bible). Why are these men important?

Daily Summary
Day 61: Numbers 7:42–8:26; Psalm 54

So we are going to continue seeing the offerings of a member of the household from each tribe until all twelve tribes have made their offering to dedicate the altar. The altar and the whole liturgical life are for all of Israel. Each group participates.

We see the Levites presented in a special way before the congregation, since the Levites will be doing the work of worshipping on behalf of all Israel. Now, this ceremony isn't performed without a little bit of a reminder that the Levites are the priests because the first-born *failed*. Look at how God reminds them that a priesthood that was enjoyed only by the Levites is not how it was supposed to be in Numbers 8:17–19. Exodus 19:6, God tells them that the whole *kingdom* was supposed to be priests, a holy nation. But sin (especially the Golden Calf incident) changed how things turned out. God keeps reminding them they are falling short of his plan!

Discussion Questions:

- How do you think God will fix this problem of the whole nation not being what they were supposed to be, namely, a whole kingdom of priests? (Hint: In Baptism, we are all anointed as priest, prophet, and king!)
- All twelve tribes offered their sacrifice as a nation. Worship is not just something we do in our hearts as an individual (which is important too!) but we also must worship together as a group. What does this say about going to Mass and worshipping together with other people at least once a week on Sunday?
- Do you ever get reminded about past mistakes as a way of teaching you not to make them in the future? I know sometimes my kids hear, “Well, we would have been able to play this game if someone hadn't broken it...” Why do you think God does this in the reading today? Why do you think parents say this sort of thing?

(There are no Catechism references for these passages)

Daily Summary
Day 62: Numbers 9–10:35; Psalm 55

The reading from Numbers is very straightforward. Moses issues a command to keep the Passover, and they do. We even find some men speaking to Moses about their uncleanness which will prevent them from keeping the Passover. Moses consults with the Lord, and the Lord makes it clear that they are to keep the Passover no matter what. There is no excuse—even if one is on a journey—one must always keep the Passover. We will find that throughout Israel’s history, they do not always keep this one important command.

Psalm 55 is a reminder of God’s loving care for his people. God is personal, he loves his people, and he will attend to even the smallest of our troubles. This is a perfect psalm to pray when you are in need.

Discussion Questions:

- What seems to be the general mood or tone of the passage? Any drama? Are God’s people doing what they ought to be doing?
- Did anything in Psalm 55 make you think of Jesus’s trust in God?
- What can the importance of keeping the Passover teach us about the importance of attending Mass?

Catechism References
Day 62: Numbers 9–10:35; Psalm 55

In this Psalm we hear the prayer in the heart of Jesus as he suffered. Amidst the trial, it is a prayer of hope and filial trust, knowing the Father will provide. This psalm reminds us of the importance of crying out to God. As 1 Peter 5:7 says, “Cast all your anxieties on him, for he cares about you.” ([CCC, 322](#)).

Daily Summary
Day 63: Numbers 11:1–13:20; Psalm 56

We are continuing through our series of passages which deal with the ungratefulness of God's people. God has delivered them from slavery where their children were being killed, he has miraculously delivered them from Egypt, sworn a covenant with them, taught them the Commandments, miraculously given them bread that falls from heaven each night, and water from a rock. Nevertheless, the first thing we read about is their complaining about their "misfortunes." They are complaining about not having the delicious variety of foods to eat. One gets the sense that they are reminiscing about the "good times" in Egypt.

We see Moses is continuing to grow through this process as well. He is caught in the middle between an ungrateful group of people, and his desire to please the Lord. He even begs for God to just kill him so he does not have to deal with this anymore!

There is so much that is almost comical about this passage. God promises to give them so much meat "it comes out of your nostrils." Sometimes we have to take a step back from the seriousness of reading the story and appreciate its humor. That is a funny image! God's way of parenting these stubborn people is almost like how a parent deals with a toddler. That's what they are: spiritual toddlers.

Let's look a little bit at this "spirit" that is given to the seventy elders to help Moses. God takes some of the spirit that Moses has and gives it to others. The "spirit of the priesthood" is a distinct gift. When we say to the priest at Mass "And with your spirit," we are recognizing the spirit of the priesthood God has given to him. We are all called by our baptism to be priests, but even in the Old Testament, God sets aside certain people to give certain gifts to serve in a certain way.

Discussion Questions:

- Jesus also appointed seventy men to help him in his ministry (Luke 10:1). Can you think of any other ways Moses and Jesus are similar? What do you think the similarities between Moses and Jesus teach us about Jesus's work?
- What happens in your family when people complain about not having a certain kind of food?
- Miriam and Aaron seemed to be frustrated because Moses plays a special role. How does God react to their jealousy? Do you think people in Church get jealous of other people for their spiritual gifts? Do you ever get jealous of your siblings?

Catechism References
Day 63: Numbers 11:1–13:20; Psalm 56

David expresses hope in God over against the flesh: “What can flesh do to me?” (Psalm 56:4). “Flesh” in scripture often references man’s weakness and the fact that his body is subject to death. Through the resurrection, God will bring life and immortality to human flesh ([CCC, 990](#))

Daily Summary
Day 64: Numbers 13:21–14; Psalm 57

Do you trust God? This is a theme that will be repeated throughout the Bible. Do you believe his words? Adam and Eve did not trust God. They sin because they gave into the tricks of the devil that God could not be trusted. Noah *did* trust God. Even though at the time it seemed ridiculous to build a big ark and stick a bunch of animals in it, he believed God's words and was saved. Abraham as well—though he sometimes had to mature into fully trusting God—demonstrated absolute faith in God. God asked him to do something hard (sacrifice Isaac) and he did not hesitate to do it because he absolutely trusted God.

Does Israel trust God? Well, we have already seen by their constant grumbling that they really do not trust him. They at times seem bothered that he rescued them from Egypt altogether. So when God tells them that even though there are strong men in the Promised Land, God will help them defeat them, it is not really a surprise that they do not trust God. God's response is sometimes the worst punishment we can receive for our sins: he gave them what they wanted. They did not want to go into the land, so God made sure they never would.

Jesus trusts God perfectly. God sent him to do the most difficult thing a human can do: lay down his life for another. Our Lord trusted his Father to rescue him even from death. This kind of faith is impossible for us to have without God's help. That's why he gives us the supernatural gift of faith in baptism so that we can trust God even when he asks us to love him more than our own lives.

Discussion Questions:

- What did you think about Caleb and Joshua? How do they stand out in the story?
- How did Moses respond when God became angry with his people for not trusting in him?
- God did not just tell his people to trust in him without giving good reason. What are all the things he has done for them up to this point in the story that should have earned their trust? What are some things God has done for you so that you can know that you can trust him? (Hint: sometimes we think we need to see big dramatic, Red-Sea-type miracles to see God. But God shows his trustworthiness sometimes in small ways, like how he orchestrates spouses to meet, or having the right job come up at the right time. If we look for the small and steady ways God cares for us, we see his presence everywhere).

Daily Summary
Day 65: Numbers 15–16:19; Psalm 58

Spiritual authority matters. We see some people, Korah and his crew, deciding that they did not want to listen to the spiritual authority of Moses and Aaron. They said basically, “You are not special, the Lord can speak through us all.” This seems to be another case of both spiritual jealousy and spiritual pride. We saw it earlier with Aaron and Miriam. It is an important lesson that we all have to be on guard against. God loves us all, but he truly does call some people to certain tasks. Korah and his ilk had a job to do—an important one! They were called by God to do service in the Tabernacle. They just got jealous and wanted to do Moses and Aaron’s job. We can’t do that in the spiritual life. We have to look at what God has given for us to do and do that with utmost care. We’ll see what happens to them tomorrow!

Discussion Questions:

- If your parents give your siblings a compliment or entrust them with a task, do you ever get jealous?
- Different people have different gifts. St. Paul talks about this when he speaks about the many parts of the body of Christ, the Church. What are your gifts? What are the gifts of your family members?
- In the 1600s, many people in the Catholic Church decided that the Pope did not have a special role to play in the Church. They decided to leave the Church because of this. How is this similar to Korah?

Daily Summary
Day 66: Numbers 16:21–18:7; Psalm 59

So what happens to Korah and those who joined him? The ground swallowed them up! God issued a judgment on them for trying to usurp the priesthood from Aaron and his sons. The priesthood belongs to Aaron and the Levites. Do you remember why? They were the ones who were faithful during the Golden Calf Incident. Sometimes people want to be priests just because they want it really badly. The priesthood is the Lord's to give. No one has a right to it.

As the story continues on, we have more murmuring going on. People were upset about what happened to Korah. What do Moses and Aaron do? They defend the people against the wrath of the Lord by making atonement for them (Numbers 16:46). Through a liturgical action, the plague that God issues for the people's murmuring is stopped. We actually read a lot more about it in the book of Wisdom that interprets this event for us. Emphasis is added in the text to show the connection to the Numbers passage:

The experience of death touched also the righteous, and a plague came upon the multitude in the desert, *but the wrath did not long continue*. For a blameless man was quick to act as their champion; he *brought forward the shield of his ministry*, prayer and propitiation by incense; he withstood the anger and put an end to the disaster, showing that he was thy servant. He conquered the wrath not by strength of body, and not by force of arms, *but by his word he subdued the punisher, appealing to the oaths and covenants given to our fathers*. For when the dead had already fallen on one another in heaps, he intervened and held back the wrath, and cut off its way to the living. For upon his long robe the whole world was depicted, and the glories of the fathers were engraved on the four rows of stones, and thy majesty on the diadem upon his head. To these the destroyer yielded, these he feared; for merely to test the wrath was enough.

—Wisdom 18:20–25

Discussion Questions:

- The power of Aaron's priesthood helped the people from "the destroyer." This is a demon. What can that teach us about the power of the priesthood?
- How does this passage teach us about the way liturgy helps us against the plague of sin? What does that say about our priests?

(There are no Catechism references for these passages)

Daily Summary
Day 67: Numbers 18:8–20:13; Psalm 60

Why didn't Moses get to go in the promised Land? Why was it so wrong to strike the rock? We don't know why it was so bad! We just don't know for sure. He was supposed to speak to the rock, that's all we know. God told Moses to strike the rock one time, and from that point forward he just had to speak to it to cause the water to flow. The Church Fathers suspect it was out of frustration, or he thought it was from his power that the water would flow. The Rock symbolizes Christ and Jesus only dies (is struck) once. And after that, the priests of the new covenant just speak (they say the words of consecration during Mass) in order to bring about the healing grace of Christ. We will see when we go through the New Testament that St. Paul recognized something *very interesting* about the Rock that always seemed to be there:

“I want you to know, brethren, that our fathers were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, and all ate the same supernatural food and all drank the same supernatural drink. For they drank from the supernatural Rock which followed them, and the Rock was Christ.”

—1 Corinthians 10:1–4

Yes, you read that right. Christ was present in the Old Testament, following them around!

Discussion Questions:

- What do you think about Moses not being able to go to the Promised Land?
- God tells Aaron that the Levites “shall have no inheritance in the land... I am your portion and your inheritance” (Numbers 18:20). God is their inheritance. Which is better, to receive the land as their inheritance or the Lord himself?
- How does this story and its connection to Christ help you appreciate the gift of God's grace that we receive at Mass?

(There are no Catechism references for these passages)

Daily Summary
Day 68: Numbers 20:14–22:20; Psalm 61

The serpents which came and bit the people are called, “Nahasherim ha seraphim.” This can mean “dragon, or serpent” but the word “seraphim” means “burning ones.” This is the same word used for the angels, but these are likely not good angels. They are demons. Literally, these are seraphim snakes. How awful—demon snakes going around biting people! St Augustine says that God actually allowed demons to come and hurt the people as a consequence of their constant murmuring. God also provides a cure, though. Moses makes a bronze image of one of these devil snakes and any time someone looks at it, they will be healed.

Jesus actually takes this story and uses it to explain the meaning of his own death. In John 3 he says the Son of Man will be lifted up like Moses lifted up the serpent. What is the connection? St. Bede says that the serpent Moses makes looks like the evil serpent, but it is without poison. It takes away the effects of the poisonous serpent. The bronze serpent Moses made looks like the poisonous serpent, but had no poison. Jesus looks like a sinful man, but he has no sin. Jesus takes away the plague of death which is caused by sin. “Looking” at him is the act of faith. By faith in Christ, we are saved.

Discussion Questions:

- The Israelites are denied access to the land of the Edomites. Do you remember who the forefather of the Edomites are? (Answer: Esau). The Edomites pose a constant problem for Israel throughout the Old Testament and even the New. I’ll give you one guess what lineage King Herod came from: he was an Edomite! Does this give you motivation to try to avoid making enemies? What would have happened if there had been less drama in the life of Jacob and Esau?
- We read about the Israelites winning a decisive victory over the Canaanites. How was this possible?
- Did the Israelites seem particularly grateful to God for helping them win a battle against the Canaanites? What did they do in the very next verse (Numbers 21:4)?
- The Church reads this story of Moses and the bronze serpents on the feast of the Triumph of the Cross. How does the bronze serpent on a pole relate to the cross?

Catechism References

Day 68: Numbers 20:14–22:20; Psalm 61

The Commandments prohibit the making of graven images as idols to worship, but not images are completely outlawed. God permitted certain images to be made: the bronze serpent and the angels of the ark of the covenant are examples of images God commanded his people to make ([CCC, 2130](#)).

Daily Summary
Day 69: Numbers 22:21–24; Psalm 62

Between yesterday's reading we are getting a lot of names and some of them sound similar so let's take a moment to keep them straight. In yesterday's reading, the Israelites had another victory with God's help, they journeyed forward and came to Moab. Balak, their king did not want anything to do with them because he had been hearing about the might of these Israelites. So he enlists the help of Balaam who is a seer in the region to curse the Israelites. Balaam the seer seems open to the idea of cursing them, but in an encounter with God, he refuses to go to Balak to curse God's people. Balak is not too happy his offer was refused and asks again. God permits Balaam to go to Moab "if the men have come to call you" (Numbers 22:20) and *if* that happens, Balaam is only supposed to act under God's direction.

In today's reading, Balaam does get up and go with the men, and God is upset with him! It is unclear why God is upset today when he didn't seem to mind Balaam going yesterday. Scholars note that it is not clear that the condition which God set out was actually met: God says "if the men have come to call you." When Balaam leaves on his journey to visit Balak, there is no indication they made a second request. It seems that Balaam left on his own accord to see Balak (and presumably collect wealth). This makes the most sense out of God's anger at Balaam.

Balaam goes to visit Balak, but does not give him what he wants. He was summoned to curse Israel, but ends up blessing them instead. There should be something about this scene that is somewhat familiar. Do you remember how Abraham kept interacting with various kings in ways that we think should have gotten him in trouble? He did not tell the full truth about Sarah being his wife! Did the kings respond by being upset? No! They just gave him extra wealth! This scene shows that Israel has God's blessing and so long as he is on their side, no one can curse them.

Discussion Questions:

- What did you think of the scene of the talking donkey?
- What do you think of Balaam? Does he seem like a good person or a bad one? Stay tuned, his story isn't over yet!

Note to parents, there is an allusion to mature material in the next reading. You may want to look at the note before you read.

Catechism References
Day 69: Numbers 22:21–24; Psalm 62

This passage contains a prophecy that is fulfilled in Matthew's Gospel (Matthew 2:2) when the Magi come to visit Jesus. In Numbers 24:17–19 we read about the star coming forth from Jacob, a scepter rising out of Israel. The fulfillment of this event is known as the Epiphany, the manifestation of Jesus as the messiah. The significance of this event lies in the other nations, the pagan religions having access to the Good News of salvation ([CCC, 528](#))

Daily Summary

Day 70: Numbers 25–27:11; Psalm 63

Note to parents: The opening line of today's reading uses the phrase, "to play the harlot." While discrete, your children may ask what that means. The Israelites were not to mingle or intermarry with the other nations so they would not adopt their religious practices like worshipping other gods. The Israelites were disobeying this commandment.

After the discussion questions I have an additional note for parents about the link between sexual immorality and idolatry. Please use your best judgment for your family if you wish to include this information at this time.

History repeats itself! What was something Israel infamously did at Mt. Sinai? They worshipped an Egyptian god. We see them once again doing that here. They offer sacrifices to the gods of the Moabites. This is a famous (or should I say infamous?) sin that will be referenced many times in the Old Testament as the sin at Baal-Peor or Beth-Peor.

This passage is sad, disturbing and ugly. Notice Moses doesn't even try to stay God's anger as he had in the past. He just says in Numbers 25:5 basically, "Yep, go ahead and kill anyone involved." This is the Golden Calf incident of the second generation of people and the consequences are similar. Phineas the Levite takes decision action and as a result is rewarded with the high priesthood just as the Levites were rewarded with priesthood for their decisive action in the Golden Calf incident. After the book of Numbers comes the book of Deuteronomy with even more laws. Why did they need more laws? Because of their wicked behavior such as at this event. When you are in the thick of Deuteronomy and not really loving all the laws, you know what to blame: sin!

Discussion Questions:

- The overall tone of this passage is kind of bleak and sad isn't it? What would you say to the Israelites if you could talk to them about their mistakes?
- Why do you think God rewards Phineas for being violent? What does that say about how serious the sin Israel committed is?
- Worshipping another god is a spiritual death for Israel. Do you remember what God wanted Israel to be for the world? It was one of the promises to Abraham. They were supposed to be a source of blessing. How can God bless the world through them if they are not faithful to God? This is why the punishment for their sin is so severe. The world needs them to be faithful.

(There are no Catechism references for these passages)

Additional note: What is the connection between idolatry and immorality such as we see here with the Israelites “playing the harlot” and in Exodus 32 with Israel “rising to play” (a euphemism for sexual behavior)? The gods of the nations were associated with fertility. Worship of them involved sacrifices and promiscuity. This is why some of these practices of the pagans involved cult prostitutes where devotees would go to pagan temples and worship pagan gods and commit some sexual act. It was using religion as a veil for immorality and license. Did the Israelites really think these foreign gods did anything as the Lord has done? No! But the Lord demands marital fidelity and self-control. The Israelites were tempted by these false gods not for spiritual or intellect reasons, but because participating in the worship of these gods was self-indulgent. They wanted the help of the Lord, yes, but they also wanted the allurements that accompanied the pagan religions. It was an excuse—a socially acceptable one among the pagans—to act unchastely.

We have to remember that these foreign gods are called demons in scripture. We can see the demonic element to Israel’s fascination and attachment to them. They are enslaved to idolatry because they are enslaved to sexual sin. The demons exploit this weakness and ensnare them to be unfaithful to the Lord.

Daily Summary
Day 71: Numbers 27:12–29:40; Psalm 64

In this passage, Joshua gets appointed leader of the Israelites after Moses dies. This is very significant but we lose the meaning because the New Testament does not use Jesus's Hebrew name. Jesus's name was Joshua "God saves." In many ways, Joshua prefigures Jesus. How so? When Joshua's story really gets under way (appropriately enough in the Book of Joshua) we will see how instrumental he is in saving his people from the enemy in battle. Through Joshua, God will save the lives of his people time after time.

Perhaps even more significantly but definitely more subtle is the fact that Joshua—not Moses—leads his people into the Promised Land. What is the true Promised Land? Heaven and Jesus leads the way.

Joshua is commissioned for this role by an important gesture: a laying on of hands which invests him with some of Moses's authority (Numbers 27:18). The authority of Moses is passed on to Joshua by the laying on of hands and the sending of his spirit. This should be a familiar concept for Catholics!

In the last part of the passage, the laws of worship increase in response to their failures of the Israelites.

Discussion Questions:

- What do you think of the constant adding on of the laws? Why do you think God responds to their unfaithfulness in that way?
- Do you have a similar set-up in your family where you are given basic rules such as keeping order or being kind, but if you break those simple rules your parents have to make more rules and stricter rules?
- What do you think makes your life simpler and where do you feel more true freedom lies? In fewer basic rules that you keep or a greater number of stricter rules piling on top of each other when you break them. How can the lessons of the Israelites teach us to try with all our might to keep the general principles are parents set up to keep the home running smoothly and peacefully?

Catechism References
Day 71: Numbers 27:12–29:40; Psalm 64

In Numbers 28:9 we read about the sabbath day offerings and the remaining passages outline many other detailed laws of worship. What is Jesus's relationship to these laws? He comes to perfect them and reveal the meaning behind them. He reveals what God is teaching through them. Jesus presents authoritatively what perfect sacrifice is, what true ritual cleansing is and what the sabbath is truly intended for ([CCC, 582](#))

Daily Summary
Day 72: Numbers 30–31:54; Psalm 65

In this passage, we see that Balaam seemed to have been working behind the scenes to curse Israel by their own weakness. Remember, Balaam was not able to pronounce any curses against Israel because God only put blessings in his mouth. However, we read in Numbers 31:16 that the reason why the Israelites were tempted to worship the pagan gods at Baal-Peor was because Balaam counseled the women to go and tempt them to do so! He knew their weakness and exploited it. So, in this battle scene against the Midianites, the Israelites are avenging them for wreaking havoc among the Israelites. First, the men are all killed, among them the man Balaam himself, then Moses wonders why all the women were allowed to live since they purposely set out to get the Israelites to worship a false god. Many of the women were killed too for the part they played in convincing the Israelites to worship Baal at Peor.

Discussion Questions:

- There is a real sinister or intentionally bad component to what Balaam did, isn't there? By counseling the Midianites to get the Israelites to be unfaithful to God so God would punish his own people, we see there is a real pleasure gained at the sin of other people. After Balaam encounters the power of God so strongly that even his donkey could speak to him, do you think it is strange he didn't fear God and want to help Israel?
- Sometimes we can get mad at our brothers or sisters and don't do everything we can to help keep them out of trouble. Maybe we don't stop them when they are doing something they shouldn't and instead just watch and see what will happen. Sometimes, we might even "push buttons" we know will contribute to them becoming angry and doing things they ought not do. How is that being like Balaam? How can we show we truly love our family by protecting them from occasions from sin?
- God delivered the Israelites and ultimately got victory over the Midianites for their evil plot to harm his people. Even though fighting and war and killing are not good things, how is this showing the other nations something about God's care for the spiritual health of his people?

(There are no Catechism references for these passages)

Daily Summary
Day 73: Numbers 32–33:56; Psalm 66

We see here that the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and Manasseh do not seem to want to travel with the rest of Israel to live in the land of Canaan. They have some land on the other side of the Jordan that they like, and if it's all the same to Moses, they would just prefer to live there. Moses does not like this proposal initially because he is concerned they are just trying to get out of fighting. They assure him that they will go and fight with their brother tribes to clear out the inhabitants of the Promised Land, so long as after the fighting has been done, they can go back to the land Gilead to live there. Moses agrees to this but assures them they will be cursed if they don't keep their promise.

The passage ends with a stern warning that Israel must completely drive out the inhabitants that are currently in the land. Don't intermingle. Don't try to dwell with them as pals and neighbors, but drive them out completely. If they don't drive out everyone, the remaining inhabitants will be "pricks in their eyes" and cause them trouble. This warning is not a good omen!

Discussion Questions:

- Why do you think God wants to keep Israel totally separated from the other nations? What bad habits of the Israelites justify God's unwillingness to have them hanging around the pagan nations?
-

(There are no Catechism references for these passages)

Daily Summary
Day 74: Numbers 34:1–36:13; Psalm 67

In the laws given in the book of Numbers, we learn that if you kill someone by accident, you can flee to the city and no one can take vengeance on you for the accident. You are protected. If there is a murder, then an avenger can kill the murderer. If a man loses control of his temper and kills someone by pushing him or throwing at him, he is morally responsible. The high priest bears the sin of the man and when he dies, the man is forgiven (Exodus 35:28).

The Lord does not want evil to pollute the land. The purpose of the land is communion with him. It is not an entitlement for them to live as they wish, but a place where they are to dwell with God. It is a foretaste of heaven where we will dwell with God.

Discussion Questions:

- How do the refuge cities keep violence from escalating between people and creating feuds throughout generations?
- This passage shows that there is a difference between hurting someone on purpose and hurting someone without intending to really do them harm. Why does the intention behind our actions matter?
- You have finished the book of Numbers! Do you have any favorite stories? Do you think God's people are really understanding what is expected of them or do you still see a great deal of shortcomings?

(There are no Catechism references for these passages)

Daily Summary
Day 75: Deuteronomy 1:1–2:25; Psalm 68

Today you begin the book of Deuteronomy! The name of the book means “Second Law.” If you are wondering why they need a second law, it shouldn’t surprise you to know that they couldn’t keep the first law. Many of the laws in this book seem rather tedious and manage every element of Israel’s behavior. The prophet Ezekiel in a recap salvation history says something rather shocking of the laws of Deuteronomy:

Moreover I swore to them in the wilderness that I would scatter them among the nations and disperse them through the countries,
[24] because they had not executed my ordinances, but had rejected my statutes and profaned my sabbaths, and their eyes were set on their fathers' idols.

[25] **Moreover I gave them statutes that were not good and ordinances by which they could not have life...**

—Ezekiel 20:23–25

What, God? You gave laws that were not good? Why would you do this? Because Israel did not keep the basic and simple ordinances of God’s good and eternal law. We will actually see Jesus himself in the Gospels draw a contrast between the eternal law of the Ten Commandments, and the laws that were given for Israel’s “hardness of heart” (Matthew 19:8). This second law, while some of it seems harsh and firm, shows God as a good Father. When the children become wayward and disobedient, a good parent will tighten the reins until the child can be disciplined and learn that more freedom follows when we have good behavior.

Discussion Questions:

- Do you find this true in your family, that the more you are responsible and disciplined, the fewer rules your parents seem to apply? Perhaps it is intentional, or perhaps because the basic rules of proper behavior at a certain point no longer feel like rules, but you see the good in them for yourself. What do you think?
- In this passage, Moses recaps the story up to this point. Do you feel like you are following what has been going on pretty well?
- What is Moses’s attitude toward God? What is his attitude toward the people?

Catechism References
Day 75: Deuteronomy 1:1–2:25; Psalm 68:1–18

The law is understood as a tutor or a “pedagogue.” The law—even some of the harder ones to understand—are meant to lead people to Christ. Ultimately, we see that the law cannot save God’s people. Only the gift of grace through Christ will make them holy ([CCC, 708](#)).

We see in the psalm the Fatherhood of God. Many world religions understand God as Father because he is the creator. Israel understands God as Father in this sense as well as in a more intimate sense because they are his first-born son. He has favored his people and shown kindness to them ([CCC, 238](#))

Daily Summary
Day 76: Deuteronomy 2:26–4:22; Psalm 68:19–35

Moses is giving us the background of Israel up to this point. Much of this should be a review of where we have been so far: Israel's stubbornness, the victories God has won for them, and we even seen a little bit of bitterness when Moses begged God to let him enter the Promised Land because of the Israelites.

Moses says, "See I have taught you statutes...that will be your wisdom." What is their wisdom? Keeping and doing the law. What does that say about God's law? God's laws make you wise. Do you want to be wise and understanding? Keep God's laws.

Discussion Questions:

- In Deuteronomy 4:6, Moses says if the Israelites obey God, all the other nations will call Israel a great nation and praise God for being so near to them. If that is what people would say about God if they were behaving well, what do you think it says about God when the nations see the Israelites behaving poorly?
- Usually we hear the word "jealous" and it means something bad. Why do you think Moses describes God as "jealous" as he just finished telling them not to worship idols?

Catechism References

Day 76: Deuteronomy 2:26–4:22; Psalm 68:19–35

Sin is a source of division from the very beginning. That the human race is divided into many nations is an expression of the divisiveness of sin, but also a way of limiting sin, such as at the tower of Babel. The diversity of nations gives way to an obscurity of God and the problem of polytheism arises ([CCC, 57](#)). Moses warns Israel against falling into these errors.

The prohibition against making graven images is to protect Israel worshipping false gods. The God of Israel is transcendent and cannot be confined to an image of any creature ([CCC, 2129](#)).

Moses teaches the value of the Ten Commandments. They are a gift from the hand of God. Jesus will reveal their full meaning in his teaching ([CCC, 2056](#)).

Daily Summary
Day 77: Deuteronomy 4:23–5:33; Psalm 69:1–18

Moses spent the opening chapters recapping what has been going on so far in the story of God’s people. Now in the remainder of chapter 4, you are going to see how the rest of the salvation history is going to unfold. This is really important to follow the story of the rest of the Bible. You may want to stick a little tab in your Bible here, so you can follow the plot for the rest of books:

Deuteronomy 4:26: I call heaven and earth to witness against you today, that you will soon utterly perish from the land that you are going over the Jordan to possess. You will not live long in it, but will be utterly destroyed.

- ➔ Israel does what they are not supposed to do: they worship false gods so God does indeed take them out of the land. This will happen in two parts: first, 10 of the 12 tribe will be conquered by the nation of Assyria. God’s kingdom will be reduced to two tribes: Judah and Benjamin. We’ll read about this in the books of 1 and 2 Kings and Isaiah.
- ➔ Next, the Babylonians will swoop in and conquer those two remaining tribes. For a period of 70 years, there will be no kingdom to speak of in the Promised Land. This fulfills what is said in Deuteronomy 4:27—they are scattered among the peoples. We’ll read about this in the prophets, especially Jeremiah and Daniel.

Deuteronomy 4:29–31: But from there you will seek the Lord your God and you will find him, if you search after him with all your heart and with all your soul. ³⁰ When you are in tribulation, and all these things come upon you in the latter days, you will return to the Lord your God and obey his voice. ³¹ For the Lord your God is a merciful God. He will not leave you or destroy you or forget the covenant with your fathers that he swore to them.

- ➔ While in exile, God’s people cry out for mercy! God is merciful and restores them. He remembers his covenant and brings some of the tribes back. This will only be a partial restoration. The kingdom will only be fully restored in Jesus Christ and the Church.

Discussion Questions:

- God’s people are not and will not be faithful to him. Why do you think he continues to be kind and merciful to them?
- The Bible tells the story of God’s people who he continuously has to correct. What does God’s patience with Israel say about his patience for us?

Catechism References

Day 77: Deuteronomy 4:23–5:33; Psalm 69:1–18

Why does God favor Israel so and continuously forgive them for the sin? His “sheer, gratuitous love” ([CCC, 218](#)). God’s love explains all that he does and all his kindness towards his people and to us. God’s care for his people is expressed in his loving care and his redemption of his people from sin ([CCC, 431](#)).

This passage from scripture repeats the Ten Commandments. The Ten Commandments flow from the story of the Exodus: God demonstrates his love for his people by delivering them from bondage ([CCC, 2057](#)). His moral law flows from the same love and care that saved them from slavery. He shows his people he is trustworthy, and asks them to obey him. The revelation of the law is also a revelation of himself ([CCC, 2059](#)).

God’s people promise to trust him and obey ([CCC, 2060](#)), this forms the basis of the covenant between God and his people. His law is an expression of his love and asks them to place confidence in his love ([CCC, 2061](#)). The Commandments were written down and placed in the Ark of the Covenant ([CCC, 2058](#)).

Jesus summarized the law as an expression of love for God and love for neighbor ([CCC, 2083](#)). God loves us first and we reciprocate this love by obeying his precepts ([CCC, 2133](#)). Loving God above all things and rejecting any false gods and anything that represents them is this the summary of the first commandment ([CCC, 2141](#)).

Reverence for God is also expressed by worshipping him in the observance of the sabbath day. Because he gave us rest from our enemies, we give our time to him in the sabbath rest ([CCC, 2189, 2196](#)).

Love for God and love for neighbor go hand in hand ([CCC, 2196](#)). We show love for others by honoring our parents ([CCC, 2200, 2247](#)), strive to be peacemakers ([CCC, 2330](#)), and avoid any sin which causes offense to marriages ([CCC, 2400](#)). The commandments also prohibit stealing ([CCC, 2450](#)) and insist that we approach each person with purity of heart ([CCC, 2533](#)).

Daily Summary
Day 78: Deuteronomy 6:1–7:26; Psalm 69:19-36

Why were they in the wilderness for so long according to what we just read? “The Lord has led you that he might humble you.” They were arrogant and needed to be humbled! They felt arrogant in God’s love for them! We too can become proud. We forget our own sinfulness. As soon as you start being unable to see your own sin, God will humble you. As a man disciplines his son, the Lord your God disciplines you. Why doesn’t a father discipline his neighbor’s kids? Why punish one’s own children? Because a father loves his own children in a particular way. A father cares that his children grow up well. Discipline is a sign of a special relationship that is ultimately one of love.

We also see one of the central professions of faith in God in scripture: “Hear O Israel, the Lord your God, the Lord is one...” This is typically called the *Shema* which is the Hebrew word for “Hear” (Deuteronomy 6:4). Notice how important the truth of God’s oneness and holiness is for the Israelites to constantly reflect on.

Discussion Questions:

- How is your regular reading of the Bible as a family something that fulfills God’s command in Deuteronomy 6:7?
- God seems to “bribe” the Israelites a little bit, doesn’t he? If you obey God, it will go well for you. Why do you think he does this? Is needing to be bribed in order to be good a sign of spiritual maturity or immaturity. Do you have siblings that ever need to be “bribed” to be good at Mass? At a certain point, how important is it to grow out of that?
- God is telling Israel to handle the foreigners in the Promised Land very sternly. Israel cannot be friends with them. Why do you think that is?

Catechism References

Day 78: Deuteronomy 6:1–7:26; Psalm 69:19-36

The revelation of God’s oneness is a gift to his people, expressed in the law and the prophets ([CCC, 201](#)). Knowledge of his sovereignty allows his people to know there is no one beside him ([CCC, 228](#)). The reason for the gift of this revelation, the reason God helps Israel as he does is his “sheer, gratuitous love” ([CCC 218](#)). God elects Israel to know him and love him so they can receive the fullness of revelation in Christ ([CCC, 762](#)). Contemplating the oneness and holiness of God in the “heart” is necessary because the heart is where one decides for against God ([CCC, 368](#)).

The command to hear the Lord and listen to him is echoed in the Father’s words to the apostles on the mount of Transfiguration, “Listen to him,” God says. Jesus is the model of this perfect love and obedience ([CCC, 459](#)). When Jesus teaches, he summarizes the “law and the prophets” when he says to “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and love your neighbor as yourself” ([CCC, 2055, 2083](#)). Knowledge of God’s love and all his providential care for his people ([CCC, 2084](#)) should prompt a response of love. Because God loved us first, we should love him above all else ([CCC, 2093](#)). This is fundamental to the virtue of religion: that we recognize God as worthy of all our love and adoration ([CCC, 2096](#)).

Among the other important commandments God issues through Moses in this passage is the commandment to not put the Lord to the test (Deuteronomy 6:16). This scripture is quoted by Jesus during his temptation in the wilderness. Testing God is an offense against the respect he is owed and betrays a lack of trust ([CCC, 2113](#)).

Finally, in this passage we read the prohibition against swearing false oaths. When one invokes the name of the Lord as a witness, what is being sworn must be true ([CCC, 2150](#)).

Daily Summary
Day 79: Deuteronomy 8:1–10:11; Psalm 70

So again, we are getting a sort of recap on what has been going on in the story so far. Much of this should be familiar to you! The point of Moses's words here is to encourage the people to learn from their past mistakes and not repeat them in the future. They have not always been faithful, and Moses many times has had to intercede and beg God for mercy because of their unfaithfulness. Moses's words are a warning: Don't keep falling into these sins! Don't count on God's mercy to get you off the hook! Moses will not always be there to intercede for you and if you keep persisting in sin, God's mercy will come in the form of strong discipline so you truly learn the negative consequences of sin. If you persist in sin, undesirable things will happen so that you will turn to God in repentance. Isn't it just easier to stay out of sin in the first place? As we shall see going forward, especially in the book of Judges, this is exactly the pattern that plays out. God blesses them, but the Israelites become comfortable and they stop being faithful to God. They get conquered by their enemies as a punishment, they repent, call out to God who helps them, and then they become comfortable again, falling into sin. Our lives are really not too different and instead of judging them harshly, we should think of the times when we forget God—especially when things are going well for us. We should let our ancestors in the faith teach us!

Discussion Questions:

- Moses warns his people to take care when they are well fed and happy in the land, and when things are going well for them, not to forget the Lord (Deuteronomy 8:12–14). Why is it tempting to forget God when things are going well? What does that say about how suffering can be viewed as a blessing?
- Moses reminds the people that the Lord has done good things not because of their righteousness, but out of God's goodness and undeserved favor. Think about your life and your blessings. Think about the gift of faith that your family has so much so that you want to read the Bible together. Why is it important that you remember how undeserving we all are, and that every good thing we have, we have because of God's goodness and not our own?

Catechism References
Day 79: Deuteronomy 8:1–10:11; Psalm 70

Moses reminds his people of the reason why God is favoring Israel: his sheer gratuitous love ([CCC, 218](#)). His mercy, forgiveness, and assistance are unmerited gifts of his kindness. The gift of the law is a sign of kindness—he wishes to teach his people in the path of life ([CCC, 2056](#)).

We are reminded in this passage of the covenant God swore to his people. Deuteronomy 8:3 speaks of the manna God provide for his people: a reminder of the unleavened bread in the Exodus story and a foretaste of the Eucharist Jesus will provide ([CCC, 1334](#)). We recall God’s providence every time we pray the Our Father as we ask him to “give us this day our daily bread” as he gave to our forefathers in the desert. At the same time, we are to keep in mind that food is not the most important thing in life, rather, we are to be satisfied in doing the will of God ([CCC, 2835](#)).

Daily Summary
Day 80: Deuteronomy 10:12–12:14; Psalm 71

Moses tells his people “circumcise your heart” (Deuteronomy 10:16). What does this mean? If you recall, circumcision was commanded of Abraham to signify their covenant with God. What did you do to express that you belonged to the God of Abraham? You would circumcise your sons. This was a visible sign of membership in the covenant. Now, we all know that visible signs should express what is in the heart, but that is not always the case. A person can have a visible sign, or doing external things that look like they love God, but if their hearts are not in it, or if their heart is also attached to something else that is against God, the external sign is essentially meaningless.

This idea of purity of heart, of conversion of heart, is a theme that will run through the Old Testament and is picked up by Jesus whose Sermon on the Mount is all about the purity of heart. It is not enough that a person doesn’t actually kill someone---God wants to remove that sin in our hearts, anger, that leads to murderous action. God’s people—both in the Old Testament and including us today—have a “heart problem.” We need to turn our hearts to God!

Another important verse to note is Deuteronomy 12:10–11. God says that he will give them rest from their enemies around, and then he will choose a place for his name to dwell and a central place where they will go to offer sacrifices. This is picked up a few books from now in 2 Samuel 7. King David—one of the most important people in the Old Testament—recognizes that God has given him victory over his enemies, and then he desires to build the Temple. David sees that this passage has been fulfilled.

Discussion Questions:

- How does Moses view God? As strict and grumpy or kind, merciful and forgiving?
- Moses describes the way Israel should love God. How is this a helpful “examination of conscience” for us? Do we love God in this way?
- Why is the land so important? What does God want to do for his people once they acquire the land?

Catechism References
Day 80: Deuteronomy 10:12–12:14; Psalm 71

Why does God do all that he does for Israel? The answer is: his sheer gratuitous love. The prophets reveal that despite their infidelity, God never stops loving them and is working for their renewal and sanctification ([CCC, 218](#)).

Deuteronomy 11:14 speaks about God blessing them with the harvest so that they might gather up their oil. Oil is an important sign used in the sacrament of Confirmation: a sign of strength and healing, abundance and joy ([CCC, 1293](#)). The sign in the sacrament symbolizes its effects.

Daily Summary
Day 81: Deuteronomy 12:15–14:21; Psalm 72

Side note: our children asked, “Why were owls unclean?” Probably because they ate dead things. My girls like owls and were a little offended they were unclean!

One of the really important passages here is the one that says “You are the sons of the Lord your God.” God is their Father. There is a real relationship of love here. We also see that the Levites also don’t get land. As a result, the people are supposed to provide for them because the Levites are providing for their spiritual needs and the fact that they have no land means people have to support them. They are supposed to be poor and learn to trust in God.

Notice too this important language of where the Lord wishes to put his name or make his name dwell. This underscores what makes the land so important. It isn’t that God merely wants to give them a nice piece of property, but the purpose of the land is communion with God. God wants to dwell among them there.

We read in Psalm 72 that Solomon is God’s “royal son.” His name means “peace” so he points forward to Christ who is the prince of peace. Gold is brought to Solomon (verse 15) just as gold is given to Jesus when he is born.

Discussion Questions:

- How is Israel’s care for the Levites something that points to how we should care for our parish priests and for religious communities near us?
- What are ways your family can provide for those who devote themselves to the Lord. Have you ever invited a priest or sister over for a meal?
- What does it say about God that he wants to dwell among them? Have they always been obedient to God?

Catechism References
Day 81: Deuteronomy 12:15–14:21; Psalm 72

Israel is called “God’s son” a title that is used often in the Old Testament. It does not signify in these various uses the same that is meant when it is used for Jesus who is also called “the son of God.” Kings were called sons of God, and Israel’s understanding of God as their creator would also warrant their understanding of themselves as God’s sons ([CCC, 441](#)).

Daily Summary
Day 82: Deuteronomy 14:22–17:7; Psalm 73:1–20

The most important thing about Deuteronomy is that God gives them their feasts again. What we see highlighted is that the Israelites cannot lend something to people, and then make money off their fellow Israelites. After seven years, they have to give back anything they took. You have to cancel your debts in the seventh year. It is an important principle of forgiveness and learning to not hold grudges.

Yesterday we read Psalm 72 and there we read that the Psalmist prays for the king, that people will be blessed in him. In today's Psalms, the wicked prosper and the wicked are just fine. Doesn't it sometimes happen that the wicked are sometimes blessed and the good sometimes suffer? The psalmist is wrestling with this problem of why God doesn't seem to punish the evil and bless the good. In Psalm 73, we hear the Psalmist goes into the sanctuary of God and "discerns their end." He gains wisdom in the Temple and realizes that what is most important is going into the sanctuary with God. The wicked don't enjoy this kind of blessing because don't trust in the Lord. These nice things the wicked have are meaningless. Think about this tomorrow and the next day because Psalm 74 will pick up on this theme.

Discussion Questions:

- What do these laws about treatment of the widows and orphans, and about releasing debts every several years say about the treatment of your neighbor?
- Do you think these laws are aimed at promoting a more peaceful society? Why do you think that?
- Do you think the laws are always fair, or does it seem that fairness to people is not really the concern here for God? How is God's mercy inherently unfair (in a good way!)?

Catechism References

Day 82: Deuteronomy 14:22–17:7; Psalm 73:1–20

The Old Testament often speaks of the demonstrating kindness to the poor. Jesus will take this up in his ministry as exhorts his listeners to open their hands to the poor and even identifies himself with the poor ([CCC, 2449](#)).

Daily Summary

Day 83: Deuteronomy 17: 8–20:20; Psalm 73:21–28

In this passage, we see another example where Moses gives Israel extremely important information on how to conduct themselves in the Promised Land. In Deuteronomy 17:14—we see Moses issuing laws revolving kings over Israel. The first king of Israel, the first time when they insult God who is supposed to be their king and instead ask for a king “like the other nations” will not be until the book of 1 Samuel. Whether this is due to insight from God or whether Moses just knows his people well, he sets the ground rules for the types of kings they can have.

One important detail is that the king should not acquire many horses (v.15), wives (v 17), or gold (v. 17). Well, guess what happens in the kingdom? Do you think all the kings of Israel will take this advice? If we were to fast forward a couple hundred years to the third king of Israel, King Solomon, we see him accumulate war horses (1 Kings 10:26). Then we see him amass a large harem of wives (1 Kings 11:3) and Solomon’s palace certainly testifies to his wealth (1 Kings 10:14). Look at this ominous verse: “Now the weight of gold that came to Solomon in one year was six hundred and sixty-six talents of gold” (1 Kings 10:14). This is not a good number in the Bible. A sign of things to come!

Another critically important verse here relates to the inheritance of the Levites. Moses says, “They shall have no inheritance among their brothers; the LORD is their inheritance, as he promised them” (Deuteronomy 18:2). So all the other tribes get land, but what do the Levites get? **The Lord**. This is important to understand that this whole quest is not about real estate, it is about the Lord. The land is to be the place where God’s name dwells, where they will build the Temple. That is what makes the land so special! The Levites, through their duties in worship embody this higher understanding. They get the Lord! Jesus will come and take this to the next level: the importance of the Temple is not about a building; Jesus is the true Temple. He is God’s dwelling place among humanity.

Discussion Questions:

- Deuteronomy 18:15 speaks of a “new prophet” that God will raise up like Moses. He says the people must “listen to him.” What connection can you make with Jesus’s Transfiguration? What did the voice from the cloud say? Who was there with Jesus and the Apostles? Jesus is this “new prophet” prophesied about in Deuteronomy!

Note to parents: there are some references to mature material in tomorrow’s reading. Please consult the note prior to reading.

Catechism References

Day 83: Deuteronomy 17: 8–20:20; Psalm 73:21–28

Deuteronomy 18:10 condemns conjuring up spirits, or consulting of mediums, horoscopes, or diviners. This is a violation of the First commandment to worship God alone. Practices such as these engages in a consultation with Satan or demons to attempt to gain insight into the future. Any such practices are to be rejected ([CCC, 2116](#)).

Daily Summary
Day 84: Deuteronomy 21:1–22:30; Psalm 74

Note to parents: there is a brief mention of a man “going into” a woman in Deuteronomy 21:13. There is also a section dealing with sexual immorality in Deuteronomy 22:13–30. Some parents might consider skipping this passage as it deals with numerous types of sexual behaviors.

Let’s focus on the Psalms for a bit here. Psalm 72 said that the righteous will be blessed. In Psalm 73, we see that the wicked seem to be blessed: “I was envious of the arrogant when I saw the prosperity of the wicked” (Psalm 73:3). The psalmist is frustrated when good things seem to happen to the wicked. But then he went into the Temple and understood their true end (Psalm 73:17). So there was consolation for the psalmist that even though initially he didn’t understand how the wicked could prosper, he could understand after spending time in prayer. True blessedness is being with God. Therefore, the Temple is a source of wisdom and consolation.

Here in Psalm 74 we see the Temple is destroyed! The one source of consolation they had, the one thing they have that the wicked, even the wealthiest ones could never have, was the Temple. Now they don’t even have that! The psalmist is telling God, “Don’t you remember when you parted the sea? Don’t you know that you can heal the sick?” The psalmist is begging God to intercede. It isn’t wrong to ask God to “defend our cause.” It is isn’t wrong to implore him to help. Sometimes our suffering is so painful, we need to cry out to God for help.

Discussion Questions:

- Do you ever think, like the Psalmist, that things would be easier if the good were always rewarded and the wicked always suffered? Why do you think God allows the good to suffer and the wicked to flourish sometimes?
- What did you think of the story of the treatment of the rebellious son? Do you think it prompted a greater sense of obedience in children knowing this could be a punishment for being stubborn against your parents?
- How is the treatment of finding the lost ox and keeping him safe a way of treating others the way you wanted to be treated?

(There are no Catechism references for these passages)

Daily Summary
Day 85: Deuteronomy 23:1–25:19; Psalm 75

(Note to parents: There are a few items that deal with slightly mature material: Deuteronomy 23:1 speaks about an injury sustained to a man's genitals Deuteronomy 23:10 speaks about what a person is to do if he has a nocturnal emission

Deuteronomy 23:17 speaks about cult prostitutes

Deuteronomy 25:5 and following speaks about what happens if a man dies leaving no children. His brother is supposed to "go into her [the widow]" and take her as a wife. We read this with our children and they did not ask any questions about what this means, but you could simply explain it that the brother was supposed to marry the widow so she would have family.

Deuteronomy 25:11 describes a situation where a woman tries to break up a fight between her husband and another man by seizing the other man by his private parts. It doesn't go into more detail than that so it is pretty mild.)

Psalm 75 follows the narrative of what we have been reading the past few days in the Psalms. Remember how the wicked are blessed and the good seem to struggle. This is perplexing to the psalmist until he goes into the Temple to discern God's will. Then we read in Psalm 74 about the destruction of the Temple and how tragic it is that God would take away what brought consolation. Here, the sons of Asaph are exercising their prophetic role. Even after lamenting the fate of the Temple, they are praising God because they know prophetically that God would set everything right. The wicked will be judged and God will be victorious.

Discussion Questions:

- How were the Israelites supposed to treat the Moabites in the future? Why were they supposed to not let them into their assembly? Do you remember the story when they would not let Israel pass through on their way to the Promised Land?
- How does this story—and God's response to it—remind us not to put obstacles in people's way? How should we respond if we have the chance to make things easier for our brothers and sisters, our friends, or even our enemies? Do we ever sometimes just say "No" because we don't feel like being generous or kind?
- How does God command Israel to treat the poor and needy? How can you practice compassion for those in your family? At school? In your community?

Catechism References
Day 85: Deuteronomy 23:1–25:19; Psalm 75

Laws concerning marriage in the Old Testament had to take into account the hardness of heart of the people. This is part of the “pedagogy” of the law—God makes an accommodation until the people mature morally to accept a more perfect teaching. God intends for marriage to be indissoluble, but in certain situations, divorce was permitted to protect the woman from being dominated by her husband ([CCC, 1610](#)). Jesus will later describe the reason for this allowance as Israel’s “hardness of heart.” This passage points to certain sins that are vehemently opposed by God: destruction of the innocent or oppression of the poor ([CCC, 1867](#)).

These laws express in greater detail what is found in the commandments ([CCC, 2409](#)). We see the importance of not stealing or taking what belongs to one’s neighbor, charging interest, or defrauding someone. In modern times, practices such as tax evasion, forgeries, or not giving a just wage are violations not only of God’s words to Moses here in Deuteronomy, but violate the eternal law of God ([CCC, 2434](#)).

Daily Summary
Day 86: Deuteronomy 26:1–28:14; Psalm 76

We begin this reading with the offering of the first fruits. This is a powerful lesson about how all of us should think of God *first*. Sometimes we give to God in the form of donating to our parish, or giving to the poor only after we have paid for what need or want and we *might* give if we have something leftover. We can also do this with our time. Do we set aside time to pray first thing or do we pray just as we are dozing off at the end of the day? Throughout the Bible, we are reminded of the importance of showing our trust in God and recognizing that he always takes care of us by giving our best, giving our first fruits. It is an act of trust! If you give your first, you have trust that God will continue to provide you with enough. That is what Israel is asked to do and that is what we are asked to do with our lives.

The two groups of people going up to two different mountains, Ebal and Gerazim, illustrates the two different “paths” that Israel could follow. If they are faithful, they will be blessed (represented by the people who go up Mt. Ebal). If they are unfaithful, they will be cursed (represented by the people going up to Mt. Gerazim). Israel has to make a choice for or against God. They have to say, “I trust God and therefore I will do what he says” or they will say, “I don’t care what God has done for me, I’m going to do what I want.” We’ll hear Moses use this language again as he talks about the choice between life and death and Moses exhorts his people “Choose Life.” We all have to make this choice every day! Whatever we do, or whatever we fail to do, is our way of saying “I’m using this moment to draw closer to God” or “I’m using this moment to walk away from God.” It’s a battle, but we want to form the habit that in every moment of life God gives us, we choose the blessings, we choose to serve God!

Discussion Questions:

- How is setting aside time to pray in the morning when you are fresh and before the day gets very busy and example of offering to God the first fruits of your time and of yourself?
- How is God being a good Father by having “curses” come down on his people when they sin?
- There is a good saying that summarizes the blessings and curses outlined here, “Sin makes you sad.” Have you experienced this to be true? How does being good—even when it is hard or even when you feel like losing your temper—lead to happiness?

Catechism References

Day 86: Deuteronomy 26:1–28:14; Psalm 76

This passage reminds us of the special relationship God has with Israel. They are his son, the “elder brethren” of all people of faith ([CCC, 63](#)).

Daily Summary
Day 87: Deuteronomy 28:15–68; Psalm 77

This passage deals with the “other side” of the blessings which is the curses. So if Israel does listen to God, they will be blessed and happy. If they don’t obey God, they will receive the opposite, sadness and misery. Remember: sin makes you sad!

Now, in verse 36, we come to a very specific prediction: ““The Lord will bring you and your king whom you set over you to a nation that neither you nor your fathers have known.” This is exactly what happens in the rest of the Old Testament! What we will see is Israel failing to listen to God and so they reap what they sow. Israel, this people who were supposed to be his holy nation, this kingdom of priests, will get “scattered” (v 64).

So, here’s where the plot is going: God will scatter them in response to their sinfulness and disobedience, and then he will gather this kingdom back together under Christ. What does Jesus talk more about than *any other thing*? Is it love? Is it turning the other cheek? While those are important, what Jesus talks about more is *the kingdom*. This kingdom means something to Jesus’s followers. It’s not some nebulous idea about people gathering together and holding hands. It’s *the kingdom*. The kingdom that has been scattered, but will be gathered again. But, that’s all New Testament stuff—that’s the good news. We have a bit of tragedy to go through to get there. Stay tuned!

Discussion Questions:

- Verse 47 speaks of serving the Lord with “joy and gladness of heart.” What do you think that looks like?
- We read that the Lord took delight in blessing his people, but if they are disobedient, he will take delight in bringing them down low. What do you think of that? Why would he take delight in punishing them?
- How is God trying to win them over to do what is right by contrasting the blessings and the curses? Which path sounds better to you?

(There are no Catechism references for these passages)

Daily Summary
Day 88: Deuteronomy 29:1–31:8; Psalm 78:1–16

So the beginning of Chapter 30 teaches how God is going to respond to Israel's infidelity in the Old Testament: "And when all these things come upon you, the blessing and the curse, which I have set before you, and you call them to mind among all the nations where the Lord your God has driven you, 2 **and return to the Lord** your God, you and your children, and **obey his voice** in all that I command you today, with all your heart and with all your soul, 3 then the Lord your **God will restore your fortunes and have mercy on you, and he will gather you again from all the peoples where the Lord your God has scattered you.**

So what is going to happen again? This is important because this is the plot of the Bible: God's people will sin, they will be scattered, they will repent and return to the Lord and obey his voice. God will have mercy on them and gather the scattered people.

What is ultimate expression of God's mercy? The sending of Christ for the forgiveness of sin. What does Jesus say is an important part of his mission? He sent out his apostles to the "lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Matthew 10:6). He is restoring the fortunes of his people. Fortunes they squandered by their unfaithfulness. He knew they would do it, it was not a surprise to God, but he used their sin to bring about blessing to the world. This fulfills the promise he made to Abraham, "through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed" (Genesis 22:17). How does the world benefit by Israel's sin? Israel is scattered "to the nations" and in order to gather in the lost kingdom, Jesus sends his apostles to teach and baptize *all nations*.

Discussion Questions:

- There is a subtle line in this passage about the shoes and clothes of the Israelites not wearing out. Did you catch it? It is in Deuteronomy 29:5. It says, "Your clothes have not worn out on you, and your sandals have not worn off your feet?" We know all about the water from the rock, the quail, and the manna from heaven. But very few people realize that God supernaturally preserved their clothes and shoes! Why do you think he did that?
- What is interesting to you about this Psalm? What does it say families are supposed to do with their children?

Catechism References
Day 88: Deuteronomy 29:1–31:8; Psalm 78:1–16

There is an important method of teaching, called “pedagogy” that is present in rewarding good behavior and punishing disobedience. It is necessary at this stage in Israel’s moral development. Unfortunately, the law itself cannot save them. They are told to follow the law but powerless to do so without the grace of Christ ([CCC, 708](#)).

Following Christ is the true path of life and reminds us that discipleship is about a choice. Do we follow Christ and have life or do we choose to disobey and suffer death? ([CCC, 1696](#)).

Daily Summary
Day 89: Deuteronomy 31:9–32:47; Psalm 78:17–32

God knows Israel is going to worship other gods. So God has a new plan: “I am going to make Israel jealous with those who are *no people*, and I will make them angry with *no nation*.” How is God going to make Israel jealous with other nations? God is going to convert the other nations to follow him! If Israel has this penchant for following other nations, ok! God will convert other nations so they will follow them in following the Lord. We’ll see this fulfilled in the New Testament when the Gentile, the non-Israelite nations, are given the gospel and convert. When these people are baptized, they are becoming part of the kingdom. This is the mystery of God bringing good out of evil! He takes the evil and brings good from it.

Discussion Questions:

- How does the reading from Psalm 78 fit in with all we heard in Deuteronomy?
- Why is retelling the story, like Moses does in Deuteronomy and Psalm 78 does, so important for learning lessons from the past?
- Does your family have any stories that remind you of important lessons to learn?

Catechism References

Day 89: Deuteronomy 31:9–32:47; Psalm 78:17–32

The divisions experienced by humanity affect all levels of the human sphere: religious, social, economic, and political. In a certain sense, the divisions between nations help to reduce how far sin can spread (such as at the tower of Babel). However, these divisions can often perpetuate misconceptions of the truth about God ([CCC, 52](#)). Despite these divisions or distortions, we do see many religions understand God as “Father.” Inasmuch as he created the world, he is seen as the father of all people. Israel in particular understands the fatherhood of God because of the favor he has exercised to them in his personal revelation to them and his gift of the law ([CCC, 238, 441, 2056](#)).

The *Catechism* cites the Deuteronomy 32:34 (being sealed up in God’s treasures) to the sacrament of confirmation. When one is sealed with the Holy Spirit, he or she belongs to God, sealed up in his heavenly treasury ([CCC, 1295](#)).

Daily Summary
Day 90: Deuteronomy 32:48–34:12; Psalm 78:33–55

This is the end of the book of Deuteronomy and the entire Pentateuch! You have completed the Torah, the book of the Law! So what should we say about it all? God has been faithful to everything he said he would do for Abraham, but Abraham's descendants are not even close to exercising the same faith in God as Abraham did. Moses sees the problem and does everything he can to convince them to change their stubborn hearts. He spells out the dangers and sadness that come from being unfaithful to God, and extols the joy of keeping his commandments.

He knows these people well. He knows they will not keep God's commands and will end up being scattered. But God, who is rich in kindness and abounding in steadfast love will punish them (to teach them) and then will heal them and restore them *vis a vis* a prophet who will come like Moses speaking with God's authority. The Torah is a perfect set-up for the rest of the plot of the Old Testament and the way Jesus Christ will come and restore God's people.

Discussion Questions:

- What did you think of the book of Deuteronomy?
- What is Moses's primary concern for Israel?
- How is Israel supposed to understand the relationship between happiness and holiness? Do you understand that relationship with regard to your own family rules? When is your family most happy—when everyone is doing as they ought and no one is fighting, or when people are forgetting their duties, disobeying their parents, or disrespecting others?

(There are no Catechism references for these passages)

Daily Summary
Day 91: Joshua 1:1–3:17; Psalm 78:56–72

Now we begin the book of Joshua—the entrance into the Promised Land. Finally, Israel is going back to the land given to their father Abraham. After a long interlude through Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy, we can look back to the end of the book of Genesis and see some resolution to the problem. The descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are finally all together and they are about to go into the land of their fathers.

Not everything is perfect though! During the time the Israelites were gone, other people came in and moved onto the land. Remember, they were gone for four hundred years! No one is planning on giving Israel the land back even if they really nicely. The book of Joshua, therefore, is a book about war and God’s military victories through this plucky band of nomads.

This is not always easy for us to understand. Why are there so many battles? Why so much fighting and killing? Isn’t God a God of peace? We’ll have to wrestle with these throughout these next few books, but one thing that is important to highlight is that the nations who were living in the land *knew* the power of the God of Israel, and yet stubbornly decided to fight against it. Rahab, we see, is humble and casts her lot with the God of Israel and her life is spared. She is praised for her faith in the book of Hebrews in the New Testament even! But many of the other nations who likewise would have heard about the mighty deeds of God decided to take their chances. There is a lot of pride at play here, it is very similar to the pride of Sodom and Gomorrah.

We see in the last passage of today’s reading the entrance into the Promised Land by the parting of the waters. What leads the Israelites into the promised land? The Ark of the Covenant. What we’ll see in the New Testament is that Mary is the true Ark—she houses God’s presence. What is the true Promised Land? Heaven. What is the mystery of the Rosary where Mary goes into the Promised Land? The Assumption.

Discussion Questions:

- Psalm 78 continues on with the story of salvation history, but it deals with stories we haven’t read yet. From the sound of things, does Israel improve much in their love of God?
- What do you think of Joshua the prophet so far?

Catechism References

Day 91: Joshua 1:1–3:17; Psalm 78:56–72

Worshipping other gods breaks the first Commandment. There is only one true God and under no circumstances is anything else to be given worship or honor or sacrifice aside from the Lord. He is the “living God.” All the other idols are false, made of wood and stone ([CCCC, 2112](#)).

Daily Summary
Day 92: Joshua 4:1–6:27; Psalm 79

One interesting thing to note about Joshua as a leader is that he is very effective. He sends spies into the land of Jericho and they succeed without a problem. We also see him solving the problem that none of the Israelites of this second generation were circumcised. The first generation came out of Egypt and were habitually unfaithful and so they had to wander for 40 years in the desert. The second generation were nearly as bad (remember all the problems in the book of Numbers!) and they were never circumcised at all. It is unclear why Moses did not enforce this critical practice to keep the Abrahamic covenant! Joshua recognizes the problem and solves it by having all the Israelites keep the laws of the covenant. Joshua is not as prominent as Moses, but in many ways a better leader!

Discussion Questions:

- What caused the walls of Jericho to fall? Was it military power? Did the Israelites have strong weapons to cause it to fall? Israel won the victory at Jericho not by human power but by an act of worship—the whole set of actions against Jericho is a liturgy! They prayed, walked with the Ark of the Covenant, and shouted to the Lord. What does this say about the importance of praying when we encounter a difficult situation?
- How is Rahab being spared from death similar to the Passover? (Answer: Rahab huddled with her family, a red cord is similar to the blood of the doorposts, the Israelite soldiers were like the angels of death who passed over her house).
- Rahab is mentioned in the genealogy of Jesus Christ in Matthew 1. She was not an Israelite and she is one of only a few women mentioned in the genealogy. Why do you think she is so important? What does that say about the way God values faith?

Catechism References
Day 92: Joshua 4:1–6:27; Psalm 79

We see in Psalm 79, the cry of help to God to save Israel from their enemies. An important element of God's rescue of Israel from Egypt is not only to save them from physical bondage, but more important to save them from spiritual bondage. Only God can save humanity from sin, and Israel must learn to turn to him for true freedom ([CCC, 431](#)).

Daily Summary
Day 93: Joshua 7:1–8:29; Psalm 80

What did Achan do wrong? He took something that he shouldn't have. He took something that was supposed to be used for the Temple. Achan sees gold and he knows he is not supposed to take it, but falls into the temptation to do it anyways. God is trying to teach his people to obey him in *all things*. This is why Achan is punished so severely because the Israelites are so attached to sin, God needs to diligently teach them perfect obedience.

In Chapter 8, we see that the city of Ai is treated differently than the other cities. The Israelites were told to burn this city to the ground. The Israelites did not have to do that with every city. In fact, they were allowed to go in and take the buildings for themselves. It is not clear why this is not the case with Ai. Perhaps it was especially wicked, maybe there was lots of diseases in the city. It is not clear from the story though.

Psalm 80 is titled "According to Lillies." It is not clear who or what Lilies is. We can see that this is a psalm of Asaph and "asaph" means to "gather." It is a name related to Joseph. Right before Joseph died, he "gathered" his sons together.

Discussion Questions:

- What do you think of Joshua as a military leader? In what ways is he a good spiritual leader for Israel?
- What effect does Israel's behavior have on their ability to win in battle? What lesson is God trying to teach them?
- In the Bible, humans seem to be trying to find ways to outsmart God so as to avoid punishment for sin. We saw this at the Tower of Babel: they built a tall tower to try and avoid drowning in case God decided to flood the world again. Do you think we can expect Israel to learn to just follow God or do you anticipate them trying to find ways out of this arrangement?

(There are no Catechism references for these passages)

Daily Summary
Day 94: Joshua 8:30–10:15; Psalm 81

Why is the story of the Gibeonites in the Bible? This story teaches us of the importance of covenant in the Ancient Near East. Once you make a covenant you are stuck—even if you are tricked into making it! The Israelites defended the Gibeonites because they made a covenant with them and had to be faithful to this covenant. Now, let’s think back to Deuteronomy 29:5. Do you remember what was special about the Israelites’ clothes and shoes? They never wore out! God says, “I have led you, your clothes have not worn out and your sandals have not worn off your feet, you have not eaten bread or wine that you may know that I am the Lord.” How does this relate to the Gibeonites? Why did they have crumbly bread and worn sandals--they knew that after a long journey, clothes and sandals would have been worn out and so tried to use those things to make it appear they had been traveling a long distance. It is amazing that Israel was preserved through all their wanderings.

The Gibeonites tricked Joshua into making a covenant with them. Normally trickery is not thought of well in the Bible, but what does it really say about the Gibeonites? It says that they had faith! They didn’t want to mess with Israel or get on their bad side because they believed in God. Their faith in God saved them. Because of this, the Gibeonites were able to serve in the Temple from this time forward.

Discussion Questions:

- There is a lot of death and killing in the book of Joshua. It seems at times that God is unmerciful to the other nations. How does the story of Gibeonites reveal that this isn’t true? What was different about the Gibeonites that shows they would not threaten the faith of the Israelites?
- How did the other kings, like Adoni-zedek respond to Israel in a different manner than the Gibeonites? Instead of following God like the Gibeonites, what was their strategy? What happened to them?

(There are no Catechism references for these passages)

Daily Summary
Day 95: Joshua 10:16–12:23; Psalm 82

We just read how many kings the Lord defeated. Why did they fight all these people? The Promised Land belonged to God's people and so they had to fight to reclaim their land. Israel was too weak to live among the nations—they would have imitated them and worshipped their gods (which have already seen time and again!). They had to remove the temptation from their midst.

This is a good opportunity to consider the very difficult topic of killing in the Old Testament. It makes many uncomfortable and rightly so! Why is it ok for Israel to kill the people dwelling in the land?

There are many approaches one can take when looking at this question. Instead of tackling them all at once, throughout our reading of the book of Joshua, we'll mention one or two at a time. These are summaries of some explanations from Brant Pitre and John Bergsma's *Catholic Introduction to the Old Testament* (pages 305-312).

One approach is to understand Israel as an instrument of God's judgment. We'll see this throughout the Old Testament when God punishes one nation by allowing another nation to have victory over them. Often times, it is *Israel* being punished for their infidelity. Nations such as Assyria and Babylon are instrument of God's fatherly care, punishing Israel for their sins. So, it really does work both ways! In this case, the Canaanites are committing objective evils (remember many of them sacrifice to the false god Molech by murdering their own children). We know they have already heard about the power of the God of Israel (as the kings in this story have) but refuse to be humble before this God. We know others like Rahab and the Gibeonites have heard the deeds of God and believe. We also know that many people in these cities have a chance to flee before they are destroyed, and much of the destruction comes because Israel was attacked first. So put in the proper perspective, the order to kill the inhabitants is actually much less aggressive than what it appears to be at first glance.

Discussion Questions:

- What do you think about the Israelites killing people who are dwelling in the land?
- Do your parents ever have to remove a temptation from you so you are prevented from making the same bad choice over and over again?

Catechism References
Day 95: Joshua 10:16–12:23; Psalm 82

Psalm 82:6 refers to the “sons of the Most High.” There are many occasions in the Old Testament when someone might be referred to as a “son of God.” Angels, kings, and the collective group of Israel. “Son of God” is a title also applied to Christ at key moments in the New Testament. It may be that those who spoke of him as such were not intending to communicate more than that he was the messiah ([CCC, 441](#)).

Daily Summary
Day 96: Joshua 13:1–14:15; Psalm 83

We are reaching the end of Joshua's tenure as leader of the people. We see that he has not conquered all the nations who are in the Promised Land (the battle will continue all the way until the time of King David which is several books of the Bible from now!). But there is a sense where Joshua has reached "Good enough" status so he can start telling the different tribes of Israel where to settle.

Remember, we see that a few of the tribes (the half-tribe of Mannaseh, the Reubenites, and the Gadites) did not want to permanently settle in the Promised Land. They had land on the other side of the Jordan River they wanted to return to after they helped fight the battles. The rest of the land is parceled out just as Moses has instructed.

Discussion Questions:

- Do you remember why the Levites were not going to inherit any land? What is the inheritance of the Levites (Hint: Joshua 13:14). What does this say about the value of liturgical service and worship?
- What do you think of Caleb? He was faithful to God back in Moses's time and lived 45 years fighting for God. Now he is 85 years old and strong! What would you ask him if you met Caleb in person?
- Psalm 83 begs the Lord not to be "silent" and is asking God to act against Israel's enemies as he has in the past, giving victory to God's people. Have you ever felt God is quiet when you ask him for something? Why do you think God sometimes is quiet or seems unresponsive when we pray?

***Catechism* References**
Day 96: Joshua 13:1–14:15; Psalm 83

The *Catechism* references the verse in this passage that describes the Levites' inheritance. They do not receive land, they receive "God himself." The Levites receive what should have been the inheritance of all Israel who are called to be a kingdom of priests, a holy nation ([CCC, 1539](#)).

Daily Summary
Day 97: Joshua 15:1–17:18; Psalm 84

Note: There are a great deal of names in this chapter as the individual parcels of land are portioned out starting in Joshua 15:20. You may want to skip these! The narrative resumes Joshua 15:63.

We read about the allotment of land for the tribe of Judah. What important city do you see here? Jerusalem. At the moment, it is still inhabited by the Jebusites, but will eventually be conquered by king David. As we have seen, Judah is the most important of the twelve tribes in terms of leadership and Jerusalem is the most important city in the Promised Land for one day it will be the capital of the kingdom and the place where the Temple is built. If you recall, Jerusalem is the place where Abraham was willing to offer his son Isaac in sacrifice.

Discussion Questions:

- Psalm 84 discusses how God takes care even of the sparrow. Can you think of a time in the New Testament when Jesus talk something like this?
- Do you experience joy, comfort, and peace when you go to Church? For the Psalmist, what makes God’s Temple such a great place to be?

- Special note to parents reading this passage to children old enough to recall what it was like to not be able to go to Mass during the COVID-19 pandemic: Ask your children what it was like? How did they feel going back to Church for the first time after this? Could they resonate with the psalmist here?

Catechism References
Day 97: Joshua 15:1–17:18; Psalm 84

Psalm 84 teaches us to love God with our whole heart and soul. Love of God should and the desire to please him by striving for moral perfection should animate all parts of our human person, not merely our will, but our emotions as well. It should give us joy to love God and live uprightly ([CCC, 1770](#)).

Daily Summary
Day 98: Joshua 18:1–19:51; Psalm 85

We begin this passage with the whole congregation gathered at Shiloh. Shiloh is the place where the Tent of Meeting with the Ark of the Covenant inside is going to settle (for now). The Tent is no longer going to move from place to place as it did during the wanderings. It will stay here for the time being.

The tribe of Benjamin (a relatively small tribe) will settle near the tribe of Judah. This is very significant because Judah and Benjamin are going to be joined together through the rest of the history of the Old Testament. It's worth giving you an outline here so when we see the story unfold it is familiar to you. For a period of time, all twelve tribes will be together and will see themselves as a united people/kingdom. This unity will reach its peak under King David (who we will meet in a couple of books). King Solomon will also reign over all Twelve Tribes. However, Solomon's son is going to reign after him and make some bad decisions which causes a split in the kingdom. Ten of the tribes in the northern part of Israel will band together under a new leader. After this split, they are generally referred to as Israel while Judah and Benjamin will group together under their own king (from David's line) and they are generally referred to as "Judah." As time goes on, the northern kingdom will be conquered and carried away from their land and lost among the other nations. This will leave Judah and Benjamin still there in their land (except for a period of 70 years when they are taken away to Babylon). Generally speaking, Judah and Benjamin are referred to collectively as "the Jews" (from Judah). This is why in the New Testament, we only see reference to the Jews and very few references to Israel because the 10 northern tribes are basically considered "lost." St. Paul, we know is a learned "Jew" (Acts 22:3) but is from the tribe of Benjamin (Acts 13:21). So you can see how closely these two tribes are associated—in large part due to their physical proximity.

Discussion Questions:

- Psalm 85 asks God to show mercy to his people because of his steadfast love. It reminds God that he once showed favor to God's people, and they are beginning him to show favor once again and heal them. How does this show that Israel understood God to always be ready to show kindness and mercy? From the tone of this psalm, do you feel like the saw God as strict and unrelenting?
- What does it mean to you that you can ask God to forgive you many times, even if you keep making the same mistakes?

Catechism References
Day 98: Joshua 18:1–19:51; Psalm 85

Psalm 85 speaks of God’s “steadfast love” (verse 7)—a line from God’s revelation to Moses. God, “HE WHO IS” is love, faithfulness, kindness and mercy ([CCC, 214](#)). It is our deepest longing to return to heaven to be united with his loving God. We have been exiled from his presence due to sin, but are invited by through the saving work of Christ ([CCC, 2795](#)).

Daily Summary
Day 99: Joshua 20:2–22:20; Psalm 86

In Joshua 22 we read about the problem of the Israelites who wanted to live on the other side of the Jordan building an altar. There was only supposed to be one place where there was an altar—the Tent of Meeting which for the time is located in Shiloh. Why was it so important that there is only one altar? So there is no temptation to worship other gods on these private, personal altars. If Israel has the habit of only worshipping at one altar—the centralized altar at the Tent of Meeting—they will be less likely to fall into the temptation of worshipping idols. In this passage, the accusation is made against them for building the altar. Tomorrow we will see their explanation as to why they did it.

The Psalm here is very important! This is likely the psalm that Jesus sang at the end of the Last Supper when they went out to sing a hymn. When you read it, think about the words and how important they are at this moment in Jesus’s life as he is about to hand his life over. Interestingly, this is the Psalm that is sung on Holy Thursday Mass, just as Jesus sang this Psalm at the original institution of the Lord’s Supper.

We even hear the mention of the “son of the handmaid.” Why is that important? Who calls herself a “handmaid?” David was prophesying about Jesus when he wrote this Psalm! Jesus uses the psalms for his own prayer life. How did Jesus pray? He prayed the Psalms. We can pray the same prayers Jesus did when we pray the Psalms.

Discussion Questions:

- Why is God’s promise to Abraham that he intends to bless “all nations” important to remember while we are seeing Israel commanded to drive all nations out? While it is true God has favor on Israel, why is it important to remember that God intends his favor to extend to all people?
- What in Psalm 86 connects to what Jesus was experiencing the night of Holy Thursday?

(There are no Catechism references for these passages)

Daily Summary
Day 100: Joshua 22:21–24:33; Psalm 87

The Israelites who went to live on the other side of the Jordan river explain why they built the other altar: “we were afraid some day in the future the other Israelites would exclude their descendants from coming to Shiloh to worship the Lord at the one altar.” They explain they were not planning on sacrificing there, but only having it as a visible reminder that they are devoted to the Lord. The response of the Phineas the high priest is essentially, “I’ll allow it.”

We will hear Joshua give a concluding speech, much like Moses did, reminding the people to be obedient to God in order to have life. He briefly summarizes salvation history and the goodness God has shown their ancestors as the foundation for Israel being faithful to God. In essence, he is saying, “Look how good God has been to us! Love him in return.”

Somewhat with a touch of irony, we see the people respond almost insulted that it would be suggested they would ever break God’s law, “Far be it from us that we should forsake the Lord....” Joshua reminded them a second time, “Seriously, don’t be disobedient!” and they swear again that they will be faithful. You can probably guess what will happen next!

Discussion Questions:

- Do you feel like the Israelites who lived on the other side of the Jordan had good intentions in wanting to build a separate altar? Why do you think the other Israelites reacted so strongly against it?
- Why do you think each leader we have seen—Moses and Joshua—repeat the story of all God has done for the Israelites before they die? What does that say to us about the importance of knowing the stories in the Bible?
- We have finished the book of Joshua. What was your favorite story in it?

(There are no Catechism references for these passages)