

A RAY OF LIGHT ON THE ROAD TO DAMASCUS

One of the things I sometimes get challenged about when I'm in a public place and mention I'm a Catholic, is that old question posed by atheists. It goes something like this:

If there's a god, why does he allow people to die in a brutal fashion, in their thousands, sometimes millions due to conflicts of all kinds? Isn't a god supposed to love us all? Why doesn't he stop these conflicts and save all this misery?

I'd been stumped for ages until one day, many years ago, I suddenly knew the answer. It was like experiencing St. Paul's 'ray of light on the road to Damascus'. I couldn't believe the answer was so easy.

We know that when a person is conceived, he not only gets an immortal soul but is also given free will. This is to enable people to obey, or not God's challenges, that is the Ten Commandments. Some of these include **'Thou shall not Kill', 'Thou shall not steal', 'Thou shall not bear false witness against thy neighbour'**.

The important thing to remember here is that God cannot interfere with our choices using our free will. He cannot stop or change our choices. Herein lies the answer to the atheist's question.

Individuals, groups, and even countries begin conflicts with others because of jealousy, greed, impatience, and many types of desire. All these offend God greatly, so many of them result in the aggressors earning mortal sins for their souls.

Individuals, groups and nations have used their free will to decide to kill, harm, and make slaves of other people, all breaking God's commandments.

The key to the solution of the atheist's question is very simple.

GOD CANNOT INTERFERE WHEN PEOPLE DECIDE TO OBEY OR NOT OBEY HIS COMMANDMENTS.

This is part of the Covenant He made with us. Subsequently, we must accept the rewards for obeying them or the punishments for not obeying them.

It's only when human aggressors die and have not obeyed his commandments, that God can interfere. The results they gain of their actions here on earth before they die may provide great benefits to them, but when they die, they will have put their souls in great jeopardy, that is, to spend eternity in hell.

My 'Ray of Light on the Road to Damascus' was a simple answer to the main question. Since God is 'infinite in all perfection',

HE COULD NEVER BREAK HIS PROMISE TO US.

That promise is to never directly alter any decision and any possible actions we humans may subsequently make when we decide to obey or not obey any of the Ten Commandments.