



A Year with Torah

A way for Catholics to grow in their love of God's Word

By Teresa Pirola

How familiar are you with the Old Testament? Sometimes we Catholics tend to skip over it, or treat it as being of secondary interest. When we do this, however, we lose sight of the foundations upon which the New Testament depends. One Vatican document puts it this way:

"Without the Old Testament, the New Testament would be an incomprehensible book, a plant deprived of its roots and destined to dry up and wither."

— *The Jewish people and their Sacred Scriptures in the Christian Bible, 2001*

Our Old Testament Scriptures include the Hebrew Scriptures which Jesus himself knew and loved and prayed. How vital it is for us as Christians to know these Scriptures, and to keep refreshing our experience of them. How might we do this?

Here is something I have tried which has helped me to fall in love with the Old Testament all over again...



www.lightoftorah.net

Commit yourself to reading the whole of the Torah (the first five books of the bible) over the course of a year. It's not as scary as it sounds, and okay, you might not read *every* word, but at least dip into Torah, week by week. One way to do this is to draw inspiration from the Jewish people and their liturgical calendar which assigns a reading or 'Torah portion' for each week of the year. Their annual cycle begins anew this year on 22 October 2011 with the first chapter of Genesis.

Week by week you can follow the whole saga from creation of the world to the call of Moses, to the Israelites' escape from Egypt, their adventures in the wilderness, right through to their arrival at the Promised Land. Riveting stuff!

This week-by-week Torah reading has shown me bible passages I never knew existed, let alone contemplated. Yet they have always been right there in my own Catholic bible!

Try "a year with Torah", be persistent, and this time next year you will have worked your way through a core part of the bible that is so precious to both Christians and Jews.

Parish Tools

To assist your Torah Journey

- **Take a copy of the leaflet "Light of Torah", available weekly, either from your church foyer or from the Light of Torah website:**
lightoftorah.net
- **Further websites of interest:**
batkol.info
etz-hayim.com
- **Purchase a Jewish-Christian calendar to inspire your Torah journey. This unique calendar, with photos of the Holy Land, has the readings of both Christian and Jewish lectionaries. It can be ordered from www.etz-hayim.com**