



Parashat Pinchas | Numbers 25:10 – 30:1

Nm. 28:18 The first day shall be a sacred occasion, you shall not work at your occupations

Nm. 28:26 You shall observe a sacred occasion: You shall not work at your occupations

Nm. 29:1 You shall observe a sacred occasion: You shall not work at your occupations

Nm. 29:7 You shall observe a sacred occasion: You shall not work at your occupations

Nm. 29:35 You shall observe a sacred occasion: You shall not work at your occupations

“In addition to what you vow and your freewill offerings, offer these to the LORD at your appointed festivals: your burnt offerings, grain offerings, drink offerings and fellowship offerings” (Nm. 29:39).

I often hear my son say, “Mom, focus!” A few years ago, I read a piece of advice from Saint Josemaría Escrivá that left a deep impression as it is a challenge for me: “Do what you ought to do, and be fully present in what you are doing.”

Today, I come across the recommendation, “**You shall observe a sacred occasion: You shall not work at your occupations,**” repeated five times in Nm.28 and 29. It is interesting to realize that the **appointed encounters with God** prescribed in the Torah require preparation. They demand sacrifices and offerings. They are to be observed as **sacred occasions**. They call us to leave aside all our daily occupations so that we may focus solely on the ENCOUNTER.

It is easy to recognize the difficulty to fulfill this requirement, since we are immersed every day in countless activities that distract us from what is most important. Therefore, setting aside our occupations in order to live a sacred occasion requires determination, practice, and discipline. The prescriptions concerning offerings and sacrifices are intended to help us reach the very heart of the Encounter.

Reflection: Do you also find it difficult to focus on what truly matters? How do you prepare yourself for the **appointed encounters with God**?

Maria Cecilia Piccoli
Curitiba, Brasil