Truly, it is a question of authority. God had earned the authority to make demands we know as the Ten Commandments. God released the Israelites from captivity by powerful signs against Pharaoh, the Egyptian leader who was treated like a god.

 It is a question of authority then when Jesus threw out the animals sold for religious sacrifices. He then turned over the tables with the coins needed to exchange pagan coins for the temple coins. Jesus called this enterprise a marketplace and there was no room at the Temple for a marketplace.

 When questioned about his authority, Jesus replied. His answer, however, was misunderstood. This is a feature of the Evangelist John. Time and again in this Gospel, Jesus means something profound that is missed by those who are literal and closed minded. Jesus also felt suspicious of those who believed only when they saw miracles. Miracles would not prove anything, but when he rose from the dead, many would believe.

 Let us not forget that even an apostle Judas who witnessed all the miracles of Jesus went ahead and betrayed him, and Peter too lied when asked if he knew Jesus after the Lord was arrested. The resurrection of Jesus changed everything for Peter who became the leader of the apostles and died a martyr.

 When we pray to God, how much authority do we give God over our lives? Does the resurrection of Jesus mean so much to us that we would open our minds and believe in something impossible like Peace, justice, brotherly love? Jesus promised these things too in addition to resurrection. Have we ever noticed the prayer and response we make before Communion? It is a powerful prayer for peace in which we remember that Jesus gave peace to his apostles following his resurrection.

 What about justice? Does the resurrection of Jesus mean so much to us that we would open our minds and believe in something impossible like justice? Jesus promised justice in the Beatitudes. Same for brotherly love when Jesus said, “NO man has greater love than to shed his life for another.”

 If we keep thinking that nothing new is possible in our lifetime, we become like the religious authorities that did not believe in Jesus. We can react differently. The resurrection of Jesus which happened here and now in our human history can inspire us to pursue the impossible with all our heart, mind, and soul. Saint Pope John Paul II believed in the end of Communism when he was a young priest and then bishop. He was an activist promoting the religious freedom of the Church. In his lifetime the regime in Poland was toppled. It is precisely the saints who live now as if heaven had come down to earth. Think of Mother Theresa of Calcutta. She saw poverty before her eyes in India and made a commitment to join the poor. Her example of solidarity with the untouchables, the lowest rank of Indians gave them a dignity society denied them. Mother Theresa even inspired religious women to come to the United States and live among the rural poor of Appalachia in Kentucky. Their suffering too is often hidden even literally by the geography of the hollows that isolate rural communities.

 When we pray to God and believe in the resurrection, we can devote our lives to the Gospel like missionaries or priests and nuns. I like to read the magazine of the Maryknoll Order of New York who send missionaries around the world. Today, the Maryknoll missionaries includes lay married couples who even bring their children to live among the poor.

The lack of food, medicine, education, and housing which defines poverty grinds down the poor. It is inhumane and God’s commandments in the Book of Leviticus and Deuteronomy, for example, sought to improve the lives of those who were suffering this kind of poverty. God’s people were to sacrifice some of their own with the poor, the lame, even the alien who lived among them.

If we say, “Where is that in the Bible? I’ve heard of the Ten Commandments but not these commandments on treating the poor.” Open your Bible, I suggest, and read Leviticus 19:34 and Exodus 22:21. Both of these passages are based on the experience of God’s people being once enslaved and living themselves as aliens. In the promised land God demanded things be different. We can re-read the Ten Commandments after reading Leviticus and Exodus and see the Ten Commandments are really asking God’s people to renew society and creation and restore it to its original blessing before the Fall of Man.

While the Commandment may look backward to the original blessing of Creation, Jesus is summoning us to imagine the Resurrection and Second Coming. As Jesus rose from the dead, so he promised to renew all of creation at his return. If we respect his authority, then we can try to live the resurrected life here and now like Saints John Paul II and Mother Theresa. They did not close their minds to what they saw before their eyes. They saw it, but they lived like a better world lay ahead.

**Leviticus** 19:34 The foreigner residing among you must be treated **as your** native-born. Love them as yourself, for **you were** foreigners **in Egypt**. I am the LORD your God.

**Exodus** 22:21 You must not mistreat or oppress foreigners in any way. Remember, you yourselves were once foreigners in the land of Egypt.