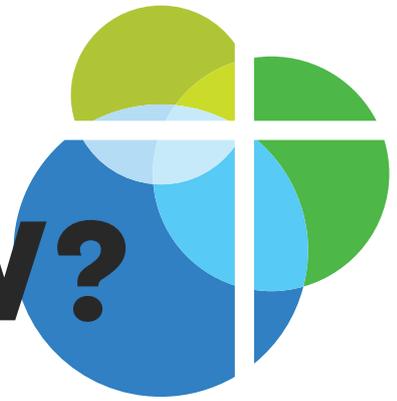


WHAT DO WE DO ON SUNDAY NOW?



KEEP THE LORD'S DAY HOLY

Exodus 20:8

The recent closure of our parishes has left many people feeling uncertain and disoriented. Attending Mass on Sunday is a major part of life for so many; not being able to go has been challenging. In a way, it highlights for us the special significance of Sunday in the Christian life.

It is easy to become complacent about Sunday, to reduce our obligation to “keep the Lord’s Day holy,” to simply attending Mass, rather than setting aside the whole day. We convince ourselves that once we’ve attended Mass we’ve fulfilled our obligation and we use the rest of Sunday to catch up on work, get the shopping done, and engage in other leisure activities.

Suddenly, over the course of a few weeks, our Holy observance of the Mass in our parish communities has been taken from us. How can we make Sunday special now?

This struggle with CoViD-19 is, perhaps, a reminder that the whole of Sunday is the Lord’s Day; a day which is meant to be set a part in the life of every Christian person and family. Genesis tell us that from the very beginning of creation God intended a special day of rest a *Sabbath*.

Jesus reminds us that the Sabbath isn’t for God so much as it is for us. “The sabbath was made for man, not man

for the sabbath” we hear Jesus say to the Pharisees (Mk 2:27). Genesis reminds us the Sabbath is meant to be a day of rest: a day in which we stop, and rest from the busyness of work, as opposed to catching up on work; a day that we rest in God.

In Exodus, God, after liberating His people from Egypt, goes even further, commanding them to, “remember the sabbath day by keeping it holy”. Through God’s redemptive action in Egypt, the Sabbath becomes more than just a day of rest, but also a day of freedom. A day in which we become free of the “shackles” of work; it became a day for celebration.

With the resurrection of Jesus, the Sabbath rest day became a Sunday observance, rather than Saturday. According to the Catechism of the Catholic Church (2174), Christ rose from the dead on the first day of the week. As it is the “first day,” the day of Christ’s Resurrection reflects the first creation. It is thus, also, the “eighth day” following the Sabbath.

Continued overleaf

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SANCTIFYING SUNDAYS AND HOLY DAYS REQUIRES A COMMON EFFORT.

CCC 2187

Some questions for reflection/journal/discussion:

- An encounter with God and with others is the heart of the celebration of the sabbath. Does our Sunday really put the celebration of God and time for others at the centre?
- How is Sunday and the encounter with the Risen Lord experienced?
- Do the rituals and actions in our home make it possible to perceive new life, greater freedom, nearness to the Risen Lord, and the joy of His presence?
- In our household, how can we better celebrate Sunday?

BEAUTY. GOODNESS. TRUTH.

According to our Catholic Tradition, truth, beauty and goodness are 3 key qualities that help us understand God – these are known as “transcendentals”. Our human words fall short of explaining the mystery of God; experiencing beauty, truth and goodness around us reveal a glimpse of who God is. Sunday is a perfect opportunity for this.

We all gather on the day of the sun, for it is the first day when God, separating matter from darkness, made the world; and on this same day Jesus Christ our Saviour rose from the dead.

St Julian

IDEAS FOR KEEPING SUNDAY HOLY:

- Listen to music that is spiritually uplifting.
- Share a special meal (brunch, lunch, dinner etc) with the whole family.
- Set time aside for personal reflection on the Sunday readings. How is God speaking personally to you? For example, an *Ignatian Examen*.
- Take time to journal. What is God saying to me at this time in my life?
- Spend time in nature, read poetry, view some beautiful art. Reflect on how they move/affect you. How do they help you experience a glimpse of who God is?

Continued

As such, it symbolises the new creation ushered in by Christ’s Resurrection (CCC 2190). For Christians it has become the first of all days, the first of all feasts, the Lord’s Day Sunday.

It becomes a day in which we are reminded to stop, to rest, to be free of work and to celebrate that God has also given us freedom from sin. Just as God “rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had done,” human life has a rhythm of work and rest. The institution of the Lord’s Day helps everyone enjoy adequate rest and leisure to cultivate their familial, cultural, social, and religious lives. (CCC 2184)

Sunday is meant to be a time reserved for resting in our relationship with God and with those whom he entrusts to us; our loved ones. It is meant to be a whole day, set apart; a day that is different, a day for celebrating, and a day for developing our enjoyment of God and others.

The self-isolation and social distancing imposed by CoViD-19 restrictions is an opportunity for all of us to reflect on our Sunday, and redesign our practices to truly become a day set apart for the Lord; a day for Him to rest in us, and us in Him.