

Dies Domini:
Pope St. John Paul II's Document On Keeping Holy the Lord's Day
Year of the Eucharist and St. Joseph 2021

The Loss of Sunday: "Today, however, even in those countries which give legal sanction to the festive character of Sunday, changes in socioeconomic conditions have often led to profound modifications of social behaviour and hence of the character of Sunday...All of this responds not only to the need for rest, but also to the need for celebration which is inherent in our humanity. Unfortunately, when Sunday loses its fundamental meaning and becomes merely part of a "weekend", it can happen that people stay locked within a horizon so limited that they can no longer see "the heavens".(7) Hence, though ready to celebrate, they are really incapable of doing so." p. 4

"On the one hand, there is the example of some young Churches, which show how fervently Sunday can be celebrated, whether in urban areas or in widely scattered villages. By contrast, in other parts of the world, because of the sociological pressures already noted, and perhaps because the motivation of faith is weak, the percentage of those attending the Sunday liturgy is strikingly low. In the minds of many of the faithful, not only the sense of the centrality of the Eucharist but even the sense of the duty to give thanks to the Lord and to pray to him with others in the community of the Church, seems to be diminishing." p. 5

The Sabbath of the Old Testament: "According to the Priestly writer of the first biblical creation story, then was born the "Sabbath", so characteristic of the first Covenant, and which in some ways foretells the sacred day of the new and final Covenant. The theme of "God's rest" (cf. *Gn* 2:2) and the rest which he offered to the people of the Exodus when they entered the Promised Land (cf. *Ex*33:14; *Dt* 3:20; 12:9; *Jos* 21:44; *Ps* 95:11) is re-read in the New Testament in the light of the definitive "Sabbath rest" (*Heb* 4:9) into which Christ himself has entered by his Resurrection. The People of God are called to enter into this same rest by persevering in Christ's example of filial obedience (cf. *Heb* 4:3-16)." p. 8

Exitus et Reditus: "'God saw that it was good' (*Gn* 1:10,12, etc.). Punctuating the story as it does, this refrain *sheds a positive light upon every element of the universe* and reveals the secret for a proper understanding of it and for its eventual regeneration: the world is good insofar as it remains tied to its origin and, after being disfigured by sin, it is again made good when, with the help of grace, it returns to the One who made it." p. 9

Enter Into God's Rest: "The divine rest of the seventh day does not allude to an inactive God, but emphasizes the fullness of what has been accomplished. It speaks, as it were, of God's lingering before the "very good" work (*Gn* 1:31) which his hand has wrought, in order to cast upon it *a gaze full of joyous delight*. This is a "contemplative" gaze which does not look to new accomplishments but enjoys the beauty of what has already been achieved. It is a gaze which God casts upon all things, but in a special way upon man, the crown of creation." p. 11

Sabbath as Liberation from Slavery: "The God who rests on the seventh day, rejoicing in his creation, is the same God who reveals his glory in liberating his children from Pharaoh's oppression. Adopting an image dear to the Prophets, one could say that in both cases *God reveals himself as the bridegroom before the bride* (cf. *Hos* 2:16-24; *Jer* 2:2; *Is* 54:4-8)." p. 12

All Belongs to God: "All human life, and therefore all human time, must become praise of the Creator and thanksgiving to him. But man's relationship with God also *demands times of explicit prayer*, in which the relationship becomes an intense dialogue, involving every dimension of the person. "The Lord's Day" is the day of this relationship *par excellence* when men and women raise their song to God and become the voice of all

creation... It recalls that *the universe and history belong to God*; and without a constant awareness of that truth, man cannot serve in the world as co-worker of the Creator." p. 15

Dies Christi: The Day of Christ: "Although the Lord's Day is rooted in the very work of creation and even more in the mystery of the biblical "rest" of God, it is nonetheless to the Resurrection of Christ that we must look in order to understand fully the Lord's Day. This is what the Christian Sunday does, leading the faithful each week to ponder and live the event of Easter, true source of the world's salvation." p. 19

- The Resurrection, and all Resurrection appearances, are on Sunday
- The Day of Pentecost is on a Sunday.
- In many languages Sunday is named The Lord's Day
 - Domine is "Lord" in Latin
 - Catalan: Diumenge
 - Corsican: Dumenica
 - French: Dimanche
 - Italian: Domenica
 - Portuguese, Spanish, & Galician: Domingo
 - Romanian: Duminica

Sunday is the Eighth Day: "Sunday is not only the first day, it is also "the eighth day", set within the sevenfold succession of days in a unique and transcendent position which evokes not only the beginning of time but also its end in "the age to come". Saint Basil explains that Sunday symbolizes that truly singular day which will follow the present time, the day without end which will know neither evening nor morning, the imperishable age which will never grow old; Sunday is the ceaseless foretelling of life without end which renews the hope of Christians and encourages them on their way." p. 26

The Day of the Risen Sun: "Wise pastoral intuition suggested to the Church the christianization of the notion of Sunday as "the day of the sun", which was the Roman name for the day and which is retained in some modern languages.(29) This was in order to draw the faithful away from the seduction of cults which worshipped the sun, and to direct the celebration of the day to Christ, humanity's true "sun"...Christ is the light of the world (cf. *Jn* 9:5; also 1:4-5, 9), and, in the weekly reckoning of time, the day commemorating his Resurrection is the enduring reflection of the epiphany of his glory." p. 27

The Day of the Spirit: "The light of Christ is intimately linked to the "fire" of the Spirit, and the two images together reveal the meaning of the Christian Sunday.(33) When he appeared to the Apostles on the evening of Easter, Jesus breathed upon them and said: "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained" (*Jn* 20:22-23). The outpouring of the Spirit was the great gift of the Risen Lord to his disciples on Easter Sunday. It was again Sunday when, fifty days after the Resurrection, the Spirit descended in power, as "a mighty wind" and "fire" (*Acts* 2:2-3), upon the Apostles gathered with Mary. Pentecost is not only the founding event of the Church, but is also the mystery which for ever gives life to the Church." p. 28

The Day of Faith: "Gathered in his presence in the Sunday assembly, believers sense themselves called like the Apostle Thomas: "Put your finger here, and see my hands. Put out your hand, and place it in my side. Doubt no longer, but believe" (*Jn* 20:27). Yes, Sunday is the day of faith. This is stressed by the fact that the Sunday Eucharistic liturgy, like the liturgy of other solemnities, includes the Profession of Faith. Recited or sung, the Creed declares the baptismal and Paschal character of Sunday, making it the day on which in a special way the baptized renew their adherence to Christ and his Gospel in a rekindled awareness of their baptismal promises." p. 29

Dies Ecclesiae: The Day of the Church: “The Eucharist is not only a particularly intense expression of the reality of the Church's life, but also in a sense its "fountain-head".(39) The Eucharist feeds and forms the Church: "Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread" (1 Cor 10:17). Because of this vital link with the sacrament of the Body and Blood of the Lord, the mystery of the Church is savoured, proclaimed, and lived supremely in the Eucharist.” p. 32

The Sunday that Never Ends: “Sunday after Sunday the Church moves towards the final "Lord's Day", that Sunday which knows no end. The expectation of Christ's coming is inscribed in the very mystery of the Church(55) and is evidenced in every Eucharistic celebration. But, with its specific remembrance of the glory of the Risen Christ, the Lord's Day recalls with greater intensity the future glory of his "return". This makes Sunday the day on which the Church, showing forth more clearly her identity as "Bride", anticipates in some sense the eschatological reality of the heavenly Jerusalem.” p. 37

The Day of Christian Hope: “Celebrating this memorial of Christ, risen and ascended into heaven, the Christian community waits "in joyful hope for the coming of our Saviour, Jesus Christ".(57) Renewed and nourished by this intense weekly rhythm, Christian hope becomes the leaven and the light of human hope.” p. 38

Table of the Word: “In this context, the proclamation of the word in the Sunday Eucharistic celebration takes on the solemn tone found in the Old Testament at moments when the Covenant was renewed, when the Law was proclaimed and the community of Israel was called — like the People in the desert at the foot of Sinai (cf. Ex 19:7-8; 24:3,7) — to repeats its "yes", renewing its decision to be faithful to God and to obey his commandments.” p. 41

Eucharistic Table: “This is why the Church *recommends that the faithful receive communion when they take part in the Eucharist*, provided that they are properly disposed and, if aware of grave sin, have received God's pardon in the Sacrament of Reconciliation,(73) in the spirit of what Saint Paul writes to the community at Corinth (cf. 1 Cor 11:27-32). Obviously, the invitation to Eucharistic communion is more insistent in the case of Mass on Sundays and holy days.” p. 44

Make Your Life a Gift: “Once the assembly disperses, Christ's disciples return to their everyday surroundings with the commitment to make their whole life a gift, a spiritual sacrifice pleasing to God (cf. Rom 12:1). They feel indebted to their brothers and sisters because of what they have received in the celebration, not unlike the disciples of Emmaus who, once they had recognized the Risen Christ "in the breaking of the bread" (cf. Lk 24:30-32), felt the need to return immediately to share with their brothers and sisters the joy of meeting the Lord (cf. Lk 24:33-35).” p. 45

Sunday Obligation: “The Code of Canon Law of 1917 for the first time gathered this tradition into a universal law.(81) The present Code reiterates this, saying that "on Sundays and other holy days of obligation the faithful are bound to attend Mass".(82) This legislation has normally been understood as entailing a grave obligation: this is the teaching of the Catechism of the Catholic Church,(83) and it is easy to understand why we keep in mind how vital Sunday is for the Christian life.” p. 47

Keeping Holy the Entire Day: “Sharing in the Eucharist is the heart of Sunday, but the duty to keep Sunday holy cannot be reduced to this. In fact, the Lord's Day is lived well if it is marked from beginning to end by grateful and active remembrance of God's saving work. This commits each of Christ's disciples to shape the other moments of the day — those outside the liturgical context: family life, social relationships, moments of relaxation — in such a way that the peace and joy of the Risen Lord will emerge in the ordinary events of life.” p. 52

The Day of Joy: “Certainly, Christian joy must mark the whole of life, and not just one day of the week. But in virtue of its significance as *the day of the Risen Lord*, celebrating God's work of creation and "new creation", Sunday is the day of joy in a very special way, indeed the day most suitable for learning how to rejoice and to rediscover the true nature and deep roots of joy.” p. 57

Day of Rest: “In order that rest may not degenerate into emptiness or boredom, it must offer spiritual enrichment, greater freedom, opportunities for contemplation and fraternal communion. Therefore, among the forms of culture and entertainment which society offers, the faithful should choose those which are most in keeping with a life lived in obedience to the precepts of the Gospel.” p. 68

“Sunday should also give the faithful an opportunity to devote themselves to works of mercy, charity and apostolate.” p. 69

Pointing to the Last Times: “Sunday foreshadows the last day, the day of the *Parousia*, which in a way is already anticipated by Christ's glory in the event of the Resurrection. In fact, everything that will happen until the end of the world will be no more than an extension and unfolding of what happened on the day when the battered body of the Crucified Lord was raised by the power of the Spirit and became in turn the wellspring of the Spirit for all humanity. Christians know that there is no need to wait for another time of salvation, since, however long the world may last, they are already living in *the last times*.” p. 75