



RECLAIMING SUNDAY

Sunday is the Day of the Lord, for it was on Easter that Jesus Christ rose from the dead and changed human destiny forever. Saturday, as the seventh day of the week for the Jews, serves as the Sabbath or day of rest, when God rested from the work of creation in Genesis. Because of the resurrection,

Christians moved the Sabbath to Sunday, either the first day of the week or the eighth day, eight being the Scriptural number symbolizing eternity.

Every Sunday is a mini-Easter, a day of rest, the Sabbath dedicated to honoring the victory of Christ over the powers of sin and death. Sunday Mass is the center of our Catholic faith and practice, as we gather to worship God, hear the Word, share in the death and rising of the Lord and receive the most Holy Eucharist. Additionally, Sundays should be days free of servile work, dedicated to worship, prayer, time spent with family and friends, rest, study and works of charity. In this way, we honor the meaning of Sabbath and the primacy of our relationship with God.

Given that Sunday has simply become part of the “weekend” in our culture, when work, chores and sports keeps it from being Sabbath for us, a significant goal of our Go Make Disciples initiative is to grow in both understanding and practice of Sunday in its Christian context and meaning among our people. A theologian succinctly put it this way: “If you want to drain Christianity of its power, drain Sunday of its meaning and practice.” Conversely, we can say that the more believers understand and live Sunday as Sabbath in its profound meaning, the more Christian we will become.

A NOTE FROM BISHOP HYING

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**SUNDAY IS THE DAY
OF THE RESURRECTION,
IT IS THE DAY OF
CHRISTIANS, IT
IS OUR DAY.
- ST. JEROME**

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YEARLY FORMATION NEWSLETTER TOPICS

EASTER 2020

The Paschal Mystery

JUNE 2020

Evangelization

JULY 2020

Discipleship

AUGUST 2020

Baptism and Confirmation

SEPTEMBER 2020

Reclaiming Sunday

OCTOBER 2020

Interior Life: Prayer

NOVEMBER 2020

Interior Life: Mortification

DECEMBER 2020

Confession

JANUARY 2021

Goodness

FEBRUARY 2021

Beauty

MARCH 2021

Truth

APRIL 2021

New Methods

TIME IN GOD'S PLAN

JOHN JOY

Time is holy because it belongs to the Lord. At the Easter Vigil, one of the prayers during the blessing of the Paschal Candle says: "Christ yesterday and today, the beginning and the end, the Alpha and the Omega. All time belongs to him and all the ages. To him be glory and power through every age and forever. Amen."

Time is a precious blessing. God gives us time in which to grow in knowledge and love of him. He gives us time to spend with our families and friends and time to enjoy the beauty of his creation. When we sin, he gives us time to repent. At every moment of every day, we have a choice to use the time given to us for God or for ourselves. By giving the time that God has given us back to him we sanctify time and by doing so we are also sanctified.

The first necessary step in sanctifying our time is by offering the first and best portion of it back to God. Just like the practice of tithing is a way of acknowledging that all our material goods come to us from God by offering the first ten percent of our income back to him in

gratitude for all that he has given to us, so also the practice of keeping holy the Lord's day is a way of acknowledging that every moment is a gift from God by offering the first day of the week back to him in a special way. (This is also why the morning offering is such a beautiful custom of offering the first minute of every new day to God.)

In the Old Testament, God commanded his people to keep the seventh day (Saturday) holy in remembrance of his Sabbath rest after the six days of creation as well as their liberation from slavery in Egypt. But Jesus, who is Lord of the Sabbath, by rising from the dead on the first day of the week, sanctified Sunday above all other days. And so Christians have always kept Sunday as a day holy to the Lord in remembrance of the new creation accomplished by Christ and our liberation from Satan who held the human race in bondage because of sin. Thanks be to God that Christ has triumphed over sin and death, utterly vanquishing our ancient enemy. Sin has no power over us. Death has lost its sting. Sunday is the day of freedom and victory which the Lord has made for us. Let us rejoice and be glad in it.

HOW TO KEEP HOLY THE LORD'S DAY

The commandment to keep holy the Lord's day means we should dedicate the day first and foremost to the worship of God and the cultivation of the most important human values, such as family, culture, and service to those in need. The traditional emphasis on resting from work is not primarily for its own sake, as if the goal were simply to spend the whole day on the couch; the purpose of holy leisure is to set aside as much as we can of all those less important things that occupy so much of our time in order to make room for the most important things: God, family, community.

What about priests who have to "work" on Sunday by saying Mass? What about parish staff or catechists who "work" on Sundays by teaching religious education classes or running other parish programs? Are they breaking the commandment? No! It's important to remember that the point of resting from "work" on Sundays for most people is to free them from their mundane obligations so that they can devote themselves to God in a special way on Sundays. But for a priest or anyone else whose "work" participates directly in the work of God and the mission of the Church, there is no need to rest from this kind of "work" on Sundays. In fact, Sundays are especially well-suited for spiritual "work." They should, however, try to make time for some relaxation and recreation at some point during the week.

Take some time to consider how you spend your Sundays using the guide on the next page that helps you reflect on what to do or not to do, as you work to reclaim Sundays and keep the Sabbath holy. If Sunday isn't your favorite day of the week (or your kids' favorite day of the week), then you are probably doing it wrong.

WHAT TO DO	WHAT NOT TO DO
<p>WORSHIP: The Mass is the sacrifice of Christ on the cross literally made present on our altars. It is the greatest of human acts. We should act like it by dressing well; by arriving on time or even a little early; by trying to enter deeply into the Mass through the offering our own hearts on the altar of sacrifice; and by receiving the Body of our Lord with great reverence and devotion.</p>	<p>Our participation in the holy Mass is so important--so essential to the Christian life--that it is ordinarily a mortal sin to miss Mass on a Sunday or any other holy day of obligation. There are cases such as illness or caring for others that can excuse one from this obligation, but we should always make every effort to attend Sunday Mass, even when it's not obligatory. We should also build our day around the Mass rather than just squeezing it in where most convenient.</p>
<p>FOOD: eat a meal together as a family or with friends (e.g. make a nice Sunday brunch or a festive Sunday dinner).</p>	<p>We should avoid as much as possible any unnecessary menial work--the kind of thing you <i>have</i> to do (e.g. chores, cleaning, laundry, paid labor) to make more room for the things you <i>enjoy</i> doing.</p>
<p>FAMILY/FRIENDS: do something active together (e.g. play a board game; take a walk; do some coloring; play catch in the summer; go sledding or ice skating in the winter; explore local museums, zoos, or other sites). Be creative!</p>	<p>Keeping Sundays holy requires a common effort: We should avoid making unnecessary demands on others that would hinder them from observing the Lord's Day (e.g. unnecessary shopping).</p>
<p>FUN: enjoy cultural experiences (e.g. sports, music, theater).</p>	<p>Employers should avoid unnecessarily making their employees work on Sundays.</p>
<p>SERVICE: do works of mercy (e.g. volunteer at a soup kitchen or homeless shelter; visit a cemetery to pray for the dead).</p>	<p>Businesses should not be open on Sundays any more than necessary.</p>
<p>PRAYER: return to prayer in the afternoon or evening (e.g. Sunday Vespers; Family Rosary; cemetery visit).</p>	<p>In all of this, we must avoid pharisaical legalism and uncharitable rash judgments. What looks like unnecessary work to you, might be necessary or might not be work to someone else.</p>

FURTHER STUDY RECOMMENDATIONS

52 Sundays: A Guide to Reclaim the Lord's Day for Faith and Family.

CATECHISM

- Eucharist, 1322 - 1419
- The Third Commandment, 2168 - 2195

TO READ

- Pope John Paul II, Apostolic Letter Dies Domini
- Joseph Pieper, Leisure: The Basis of Culture

TO LISTEN

- Tim Gray, Keep Holy the Sabbath (Formed)

TO WATCH

- Edward Sri, A Biblical Walk Through the Mass (Ascension)

TIPS FOR PARISH LEADERSHIP

Of all the great resources on the left, we really want to highlight 52 Sundays, which is "a dynamic guide to help you and your family reclaim the Lord's Day with prayer, activities, food, and more! It offers simple and insightful ways for your family to spend time together each Sunday learning more about the Catholic faith and having fun while you're at it." You can download a free digital copy or sign up for weekly reminders.

With your staff, consider this approach to celebrating Sundays in light of the liturgical calendar. Is this new to you? Are families in your parish encouraged to make Sundays a celebration?

As you catch up with your fellow staff members and run into other leadership members, make a point to share how you are reordering your weeks to help make Sunday a real Sabbath day.

FORMATION IN THE PARISH

QUESTIONS FOR PERSONAL REFLECTION

- Do you live Sunday differently than the other six days of the week? How so?
- What do you do to prepare for Mass on Sundays? Is it truly built up to be the center of your week?
- Do you offer your first and best time to God? How could you do so more intentionally?

REFLECTION QUESTIONS FOR LEADERSHIP MEETINGS

- In Bishop's introduction, he shared the quote: "If you want to drain Christianity of its power, drain Sunday of its meaning and practice." How have you seen this to be true in your parish and community?
- If you are someone who has to do spiritual oriented "work" on Sundays, how do you stay accountable to still making time for your family and for leisure during the week?

PHASE ONE

LEADERSHIP FORMATION | Begins Pentecost 2020

- Principals and school staff members should be preparing for the SOWDI year, which will consist of studying along with these monthly newsletters according to an adapted schedule.
- By now, pastors and the parish Evangelization Lead should have invited staff and/or parishioners to join your Evangelization Team. Take advantage NOW of 3 months FREE training courses for your parish staff and leaders at Revive Parishes. Start with the course on missionary discipleship, and then we would recommend the course on evangelization. Browse the other courses available and ask other key leaders in your parish or school to take the course most applicable to them
- Don't let the difficulty of getting people together in person become an obstacle to the formation of your parish leadership. If live meetings don't seem doable at the moment, you can still have virtual meetings or better yet the pastor can call each of his key leaders to check in on their personal progress in fulfilling the primary formation goals of (1) daily prayer, (2) monthly confession, (3) Friday penance, (4) keeping Sunday holy, and (5) using the monthly newsletters well.
- Remember that our primary focus right now is on deepening our own intellectual and spiritual formation as leaders in our parishes. So don't get caught up yet in thinking ahead to the next phase. There will be time dedicated to planning for that when it comes closer.
- One thing we should be doing now, which we didn't anticipate when we first outlined the phases back in February, is thinking of ways to reach out and stay in touch with all those people who were involved in the parish but whom we haven't seen since March because of COVID. Some great initiatives we've seen so far:
 - One parish sent a postcard to every household in its geographic boundaries with the simple message that there is hope in Jesus Christ during this time of pandemic.
 - At some parishes, people are calling everyone on their books just to ask how they are doing, or if there's anything they need.
 - Some priests are setting up zoom meetings with open invitations to all parishioners to log in for conversation, Q&A, prayer, etc.

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**EUCHARIST IN FRUIT
WREATH, 1648**

JAN DAVIDSZ. DE HEEM

The Holy Mass and the Holy Eucharist are at the very heart of the Christian celebration of Sunday. There are many beautiful images of the Eucharist in the history of sacred art, but this one has always appealed to me in a unique way. The fruits and flowers with which the artist has surrounded the chalice and host are wonderfully suggestive of the superabundant fruitfulness of the Eucharist--its miraculous life-giving power. Our Lord Jesus said to his disciples, "I came that you might have life, and have it to the full" (John 10:10). We receive that fullness of life in the Eucharist: "He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life" (John 6:54). The still-life presentation of the Eucharist in this image also evokes a sense of peace and contemplation that captures the idea of Sunday as a day of rest, a day of holy leisure on which we free ourselves from the tyranny of our worldly occupations in order to give ourselves more fully to worship, prayer, contemplation, and love.