

*Living*  
**THE GIFT OF**  
**SUNDAY**

ARCHDIOCESE *of* MILWAUKEE

# *Living* THE GIFT OF SUNDAY



---

Excerpts from the English translation of The Roman Missal © 2010,  
International Commission on English in the Liturgy Corporation. All rights reserved.

Scripture texts in this work are taken from the New American Bible, revised edition © 2010, 1991, 1986, 1970 Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, Washington, D.C. and are used by permission of the copyright owner. All Rights Reserved. No part of the New American Bible may be reproduced in any form without permission in writing from the copyright owner.



## *Table of Contents*

Introduction from Archbishop Jerome Listecki . . . . .	7-9
Sunday is a Day of Christ's Resurrection . . . . .	10-12
Sunday is a Day of Peace . . . . .	13-15
Sunday is the Day that Belongs to God . . . . .	16-18
Sunday is a Day of Rest . . . . .	19-21
Sunday is a Day of Worship . . . . .	.22-24
Sunday is a Day of Loving Sacrifice . . . . .	.25-27
Sunday is a Day of Family . . . . .	.28-29
Sunday is a Day of Mission . . . . .	30-32
Sunday is a Day of Unity . . . . .	33-35
Sunday is Our First Day . . . . .	36-38

---

### *Acknowledgements*

---

A special thank you to Fr. Brad Krawczyk for his contribution to Living the Gift of Sunday. Fr. Brad was the lead writer on the team that consisted of Archbishop Jerome Listecki, Bishop Jeffrey Haines, Bishop James Schuerman, Pete Burds, Lydia LoCoco, Susan McNeil, Randy Nohl, Margaret Rhody, and Jerry Topczewski. We also want to recognize the work of Letzbia Laing-Martinez in translating Living the Gift of Sunday, Caroline Harvey, Meghan Endter, and Gina Rupcic of the Archdiocesan Communication Office for the layout and design of the booklet, and Kim Mandelkow of the Office for Worship for providing approved liturgical texts in Spanish. We are extremely grateful for this group's dedication and work on this resource!



---

## *An Introduction* **FROM ARCHBISHOP JEROME LISTECKI**

---

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

It is my hope that you will utilize this book to enliven your prayer and appreciation for Sunday over the next ten weeks. Living the Gift of Sunday contains ten weeks of reflections on how Sunday is a great gift for us, and how we might live that gift out in our everyday lives. It is meant for individual reflection, but could also be used with your family or as the basis of a small group discussion.

Many of the Prefaces of the Eucharistic Prayer at Mass begin, "It is truly right and just, our duty and our salvation, always and everywhere to give you thanks, Lord, holy Father, almighty and eternal God through Christ our Lord." Let us keep this attitude in mind over these next weeks as we reflect on the meaning of Sunday in our lives as Christians, remembering that Sunday is a gift from God.

"The Church draws her life from the Eucharist." Pope Saint John Paul II wrote this short but meaningful phrase in his encyclical letter *Ecclesia de Eucharistia* (7). The early Christians even at the risk of being misunderstood and in the face of persecution and death, faithfully proclaimed "*Sine Dominico non possumus* - we cannot live without celebrating the Lord's Day" (Cf. St. Justin Apologia I, 67, 3-5: PG 6, 430; Acta SS. *Saturnini, Dativi et aliorum plurimorum Martyrum in Africa*, 7, 9, 10: PL 8, 707, 709-710).

---

*It is my hope that you will utilize this book to enliven  
your prayer and appreciation for Sunday.*

---





When we gather for Mass on Sunday, as fellow Christians have through the millennia, we know at our deepest level that we are brought in the newness of life that is Jesus Christ himself as we hear Sacred Scripture and are nourished and strengthened by his Body and Blood.

Sundays are different for Christians. In fact, in our modern world, what defines us as Catholics is our participation in the praise of God as a community as we offer to the Father, through the power

of the Holy Spirit, the living sacrifice of Christ on the cross for our salvation, on Sundays.

Each Sunday is a participation in the very action of Christ himself, and we encounter the living God alive in our midst. At the very beginning of Mass, we make the Sign of the Cross. We may take this prayer for granted. We may pray it with profound devotion. For us, as Christians, it is a reminder that we are caught up in the love of the Blessed Trinity itself, as we recall the very instrument of our salvation.

Saint Cyril of Jerusalem asserts, "Let us not then be ashamed to confess the Crucified. Be the Cross our seal made with boldness by our fingers on our brow, and on everything" (*Catechetical Lectures*, Lecture XIII). The Sign of the Cross,

as with many liturgical signs, conveys a richness of meanings. Saint Francis de Sales notes, "When making the Sign of the Cross, therefore, we confess three great mysteries: the Trinity, the Passion, and the remission of sins" (*The Sign of the Cross*).

As we begin each week in prayer, we are consciously aware of the work of the Blessed Trinity. As we mark the Lord's Day with fidelity, we come to church with joys and sorrows. We bring all of this to God and allow God to transform us. It is impossible to limit what Sunday is and what we religiously bring to our worship of God each week. This booklet is a starting point to invigorate our appreciation for what Sunday is and what the Blessed Trinity accomplishes in and through lives filled with grace.

Let us ask through the intercession of Mary Mother of the Church, that as we look to her as a model, we may grow in our love for God through our fervent worship and Christian living.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "+ Jerome E. Listecki". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a cross at the beginning.

+ Jerome E. Listecki  
Archbishop of Milwaukee

---

*Each Sunday  
is a participation  
in the very action  
of Christ himself,  
and we encounter  
the living God  
alive in our midst.*

---





# Sunday is A DAY OF CHRIST'S RESURRECTION

## From Sacred Scripture

*Mark 16:2-6*

*Very early when the sun had risen, on the first day of the week, they came to the tomb. They were saying to one another, "Who will roll back the stone for us from the entrance to the tomb?" When they looked up, they saw that the stone had been rolled back; it was very large. On entering the tomb they saw a young man sitting on the right side, clothed in a white robe, and they were utterly amazed. He said to them, "Do not be amazed! You seek Jesus of Nazareth, the crucified. He has been raised..."*

## From the Mass, Source and Summit of Life

We encounter the risen Christ in the Word of God proclaimed and in the Eucharist we share. During the Eucharistic Prayer, we recall Christ's dying to save us from sin and death and his rising to bring us new and eternal life.

"Therefore, O Lord, as we celebrate the memorial of the saving Passion of your Son, his wondrous Resurrection and Ascension into heaven, and as we look forward to his second coming, we offer you in thanksgiving this holy and living sacrifice" (Eucharistic Prayer III).

## From the Riches of Our Faith

Our lives have meaning because Christ rose from the dead. He is alive and present to us in Word, in Sacrament and in His Holy Spirit, who moves and guides us. Sunday is a day to rejoice in new life, eternal life, life in the love of God. We are invited to see every Sunday as a little Easter.

"Jesus rose from the dead 'on the first day of the week.' Because it is the 'first day,' the day of Christ's Resurrection recalls the first creation. Because it is the 'eighth day' following the sabbath, it symbolizes the new creation ushered in by Christ's Resurrection. For Christians it has become the first of all days, the first of all feasts, the Lord's Day" (*The Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2174) [hereinafter, CCC]. "We all gather on the day of the sun, for it is the first day [after the Jewish sabbath, but also the first day] when God, separating matter from darkness, made the world; and on this same day Jesus Christ our Savior rose from the dead" (St. Justin, I Apol. 67, PG 6, 429 and 432).

Christ's triumph over death in His glorious Resurrection is the completion and fulfillment of the Old Law. It is, in Sunday worship, the highest and greatest of days, the principle day of obligation for the Christian faithful, and the culmination renewed and re-encountered each week, of the salvation God has wrought in His Son.

St. Luke's Gospel story of the two disciples and their encounter with the risen Jesus on Easter Sunday on the road to Emmaus (24: 13-35) beautifully connects how we come to know our risen Lord through Mass every Sunday. As the disciples walked and discussed Sacred Scripture with him they believed him to be a stranger, but they realized that it was the risen Jesus in the breaking of the bread. Each Sunday our hearts are stirred by Jesus in the word as he prepares us to receive his Real Presence in the Eucharist.

## Live It!

- Celebrate Sunday as a little Easter each week by recalling Christ's resurrection and look forward to eternal life in Him.
- What area of your life are you in need of God's new life? Reflect on how God has been present in your life even in difficult times. Look for ways to share these insights with people you know.
- Ask your family and friends: What is something that gives you hope?



## Sacred Scripture throughout the Week

1. Psalm 118:24            This is the day the Lord has made.
2. Luke 24:1-9             Why seek the living one among the dead?
3. John 11:25-26          I am the resurrection and the life.
4. John 20:1-9             He saw and believed.
5. Acts 4:33                The Apostles bore witness to the resurrection.
6. 1 Peter 1:3-5            Hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

*Remember, Sunday is a Day of Christ's Resurrection.*



## *Sunday is* **A DAY OF PEACE**

### From Sacred Scripture

*John 20:19, 21-23*

*On the evening of that first day of the week, when the doors were locked where the disciples were for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in their midst and said to them, "Peace be with you!" [Jesus] said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you." And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the holy Spirit. Whose sins you forgive are forgiven them, and whose sins you retain are retained."*

### From the Mass, Source and Summit of Life

Christ's atoning sacrifice for our sins on the cross makes reconciliation possible. Peace and harmony are possible. Through the restoration of our relationship with God, we can begin to recognize the other relationships in our lives that are also in need of healing. Reconciliation requires an admission of our own responsibility for sin before God. At every Mass, we start with the Penitential Act, acknowledging our sins and announce our trust in God's mercy. "May almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us our sins, and bring us to everlasting life" (*The Roman Missal*).

At the Rite of Peace, the celebrant prays that the peace of Christ fills our hearts. As a sign of hope, we extend a sign of peace to those around us. "Lord Jesus Christ, who said to your Apostles: Peace I leave you, my peace I give you, look not on our sins, but on the faith of your Church, and graciously grant her peace and unity in accordance with your will. Who live and reign for ever and ever. Amen. The peace of the Lord be with you always. And with your spirit" (*The Roman Missal*).

### From the Riches of Our Faith

The Sign of Peace is more than simply a greeting. It is more a prayer for reconciliation as a foretaste of communion in the Body of Christ.

Among many rich cultural expressions of reconciliation, the beloved Polish custom of Oplatek, or the Christmas wafer, is a fascinating one. Before the meal is served, family members break a piece of their Christmas wafers to share with the others in their household, wishing each other well, asking for forgiveness for misunderstandings, and making peace with one another. There's even a wafer to be shared with the animals of the house! We need signs and symbols that move us to true reconciliation and peace.

"With compassion, Christ declares the sabbath for doing good rather than harm, for saving life rather than killing" (CCC, 2173).

Sunday, because of its principal place as the primary day of worship, is also a day for laying aside jealousies, anger, and ill-will. The Lord demands our worship, but that worship may not precede the forgiveness of the sins and faults of our brothers and sisters. We are called to bring God's peace, mercy, and love into our world.



---

*Sunday, because of its principal place as the primary day of worship, is also a day for laying aside jealousies, anger, and ill-will.*

---

### Live It!

- If you need reconciliation with a family member or a member of the wider community, be the first to hold out an olive branch. Reflect on a person or area of your city, country, the world that needs peace.
- Celebrate the Sacrament of Penance (Confession). Consider going together as a family for each person to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation.
- Pray together the Chaplet of Divine Mercy and feel the warmth of God's forgiving love.

### Sacred Scripture throughout the Week

- |                         |   |
|-------------------------|---|
| 1. Matthew 5:9          | Blessed are the peacemakers.                              |
| 2. Matthew 5:23-24      | Reconcile with others before offering gifts at the altar. |
| 3. John 14:27           | My peace I give to you.                                   |
| 4. John 16:33           | I have conquered the world.                               |
| 5. 2 Thessalonians 3:16 | May the Lord of peace give you peace.                     |
| 6. 1 John 4:20          | Love others as you love God.                              |

---

*Remember, Sunday is a Day of Peace.*

---





# Sunday is THE DAY THAT BELONGS TO GOD

## From Sacred Scripture

*Exodus 20:8-10a*

*Remember the sabbath day—keep it holy. Six days you may labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a sabbath of the LORD your God.*

## From the Mass, Source and Summit of Life

The Sacred Scriptures are the word of God, inspired by the Holy Spirit. At Mass during the Liturgy of the Word, God speaks to us through the readings and the Gospel. The Responsorial Psalm helps us to meditate on God's word.

"You are indeed Holy, O Lord, and all you have created rightly gives you praise, for through your Son our Lord Jesus Christ, by the power and working of the Holy Spirit, you give life to all things and make them holy, and you never cease to gather a people to yourself, so that from the rising of the sun to its setting a pure sacrifice may be offered to your name" (Eucharistic Prayer III).

## From the Riches of Our Faith

As Christians, we believe that God is at the very center of our lives. Our spiritual journey on earth is one of deepening our relationship with God, and that includes listening intently to His word. The deepest expression of that listening is hearing the communal proclamation of Sacred Scripture in the Liturgy of the Word. We listen to God speak so that we might internalize His message and put it into practice.

*The Catechism of the Catholic Church* starts its reflection on the Third Commandment with the scriptural meaning of the Sabbath. Exodus 20:8-11 states that the Sabbath was the seventh day on which the Lord rested after the work of the previous six days. Deuteronomy 5:12 adds that the Sabbath is a day of our renewing the covenant with God. The Sabbath is connected to creation and covenant. Second-century writers such as Justin Martyr attest to the widespread practice of Sunday worship (*First Apology*, chapter 67), and by 361 AD it had become a mandated weekly occurrence.

"The celebration of Sunday observes the moral commandment inscribed by nature in the human heart to render to God an outward, visible, and regular worship 'as a sign of his universal beneficence to all' [St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica* II-II, 122,4]. Sunday worship fulfills the moral command of the Old Covenant, taking up its rhythm and spirit in the weekly celebration of the Creator and Redeemer of his people" (CCC, 2176). We are naturally driven to make Sundays special. Our active participation in the Lord's Day shows the world that we belong to God. Each Sunday, at Mass, God pours out His richest blessings upon us.

For Christians, Sunday is the day to come together to worship. Early Christians met together on Sunday to break bread and for preaching (Acts 20:7). Revelation 1:10 also refers to the Lord's Day. We receive God in the preached Word and through the Lord's Supper. At Mass, the Lord gives us what we most need. Sunday makes Monday right. Let us find time to be with Him.

As the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* says, God made the Sabbath for man, providing the model of rest and refreshment it should embody (Cf. CCC, 2172, Matthew 2:27-28). Sunday specially belongs to God as it commemorates His saving deeds, from Creation through the Exodus to the great Paschal Mystery which is recalled each Sunday.



## Live It!

- Strive to put God at the center of your day. Arrive to Mass early, review the week and offer to God the good and ask forgiveness for the failures. Offer up the gifts and challenges of your past week and upcoming week along with the bread and wine as they are brought to the altar to be transformed.
- In the Book of Genesis God uses the Sabbath Rest to ponder the grandeur of Creation. After Mass consider a walk down a hiking trail, a ride down a bike path, a stroll along the lakeshore, or a climb up on the hills and give praise to God for “How Good” it is.
- Begin and end each day of the week by making the Sign of the Cross prayerfully recognizing we are loved by God.

### Sacred Scripture throughout the Week

1. Genesis 1:1-2:3 God created the heavens and the earth.
2. Psalm 34:9 Taste and see that the Lord is good.
3. Matthew 12:1-8 The Son of Man is Lord of the sabbath.
4. Matthew 22:36-40 You shall love the Lord with all your heart, soul, and mind.
5. Luke 24:30-35 Jesus was made known in the breaking of the bread.
6. Acts 20:7 Gathering on the first day of the week to break bread.

*Remember, Sunday is the Day that Belongs to God.*



### From Sacred Scripture

*Matthew 11:28-30*

*Come to me, all you who labor and are burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am meek and humble of heart; and you will find rest for yourselves. For my yoke is easy, and my burden light.*

### From the Mass, Source and Summit of Life

Notice the relationship between the moments of sacred silence in the Mass. In the Penitential Act and after the invitation “Let us pray,” the faithful are called to recollect themselves (*General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, 45). Before the Liturgy of the Word, after the First and Second Readings, and after the Homily are opportunities to pause and be silent to prepare to receive God’s word and reflect on what was heard (GIRM, 56). Sacred silence during the Eucharistic Prayer and the prayer of thanksgiving after Holy Communion help all to praise God in their hearts (GIRM, 45; 78). These restful pauses help us to slow down, relax and meditate on the presence of God in our lives and the life of the world, and to experience Sunday as a day of rest.

## From the Riches of Our Faith

Throughout the week, our lives are filled with busyness, social media, and tending to the day-to-day necessities of life. Distractions are constant. We need rest to be able to relax our bodies, clear our minds and refresh our spirits. Taking time away from work, shopping, and our daily routines is essential for our spiritual, mental and physical wellbeing.

With the current emphasis upon being busy at home and work and the emphasis upon new forms of electronic communication, busyness is everywhere. There truly needs to be a sacred space and time which the job cannot penetrate. Consider the words of Saint Augustine, "Great art Thou, O Lord, and greatly to be praised; great is Thy power, and of Thy wisdom, there is no end...Thou movest us to delight in praising Thee; for Thou hast formed us for Thyself, and our hearts are restless till they find rest in Thee (*Confessions*).

Catholic recommendations to rest on Sunday do not hinder participation in "ordinary and innocent occupations." In the spirit of the Sabbath, Catholics ought to observe a day of rest from servile work, which also becomes "a day of protest against the servitude of work and the worship of money" (CCC, 2172).

"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).

People are not a slave to work (in all its many forms); work is, rather, the servant of humankind, wherein, by cooperation with God's grace, we fulfill our obligation to provide for material goods for all. Nonetheless, these goods are not ends in themselves, but tools we employ, as the Catechism says, to cultivate our lives of faith for the good of ourselves, our families, and our world. We need adequate time to rest from labor to fulfill these goals, and to render due thanks to the God from Whom all gifts come.



## Live It!

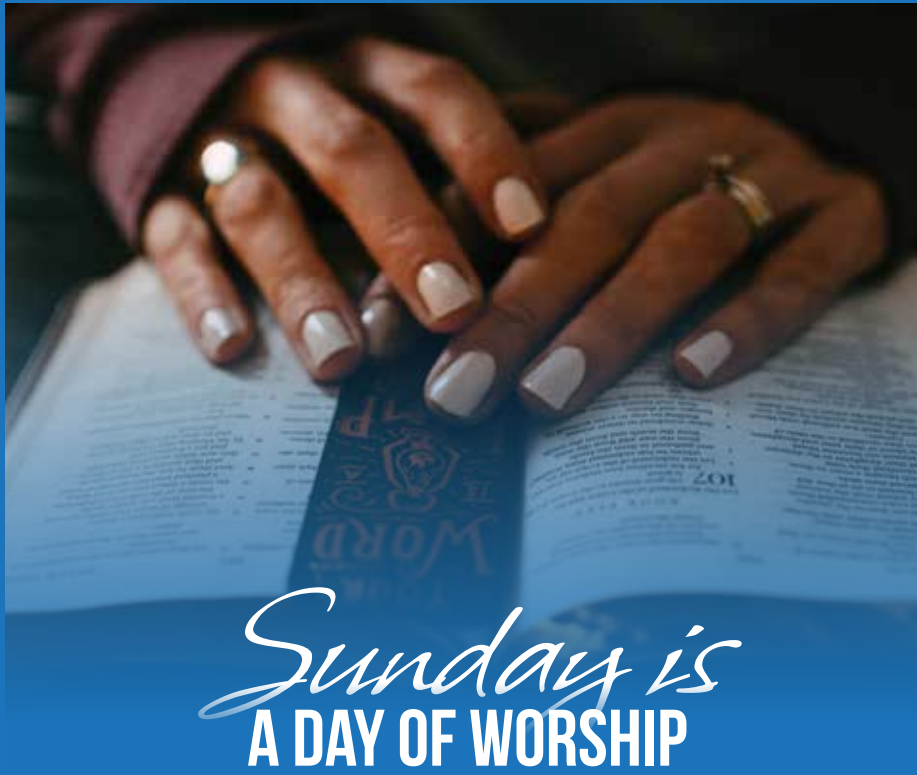
- What is one thing you could make time for on Sunday that you don't have time for the rest of the week? It might be something you do with family or friends or by yourself, i.e. take a walk or bike ride, watch a movie, read.
- Look for ways to clear your Sunday of unnecessary work and busyness. Rather than filling the day with shopping, cleaning and organizing, focus on prayer, family and leisure.
- Take a break from the iPhone, television, stereo and computer, and let your mind rest in the silence. "Be Still, and know that I am God!" (Psalm 46:11). Moreover, post a message regarding your electronic sabbatical to encourage others to do the same. Visit a library or bookstore to select a book or audio-book, and set aside quiet time for a journey of imagination. Parents or older siblings might even take turns reading the story to younger children.

### Sacred Scripture throughout the Week

- |    |                |   |
|----|----------------|---|
| 1. | Exodus 33:14   | The Lord will provide rest.                   |
| 2. | Isaiah 14:3-4  | The Lord offers rest from sorrow and turmoil. |
| 3. | Mark 2:27      | The sabbath was made for humanity.            |
| 4. | Mark 6:30-32   | Come away and rest awhile with Jesus.         |
| 5. | Luke 4:16-19   | Jesus came to bring glad tiding to the poor.  |
| 6. | Hebrews 4:1-11 | Sabbath rest remains for the people of God.   |

*Remember, Sunday is a Day of Rest.*





# Sunday is A DAY OF WORSHIP

## From Sacred Scripture

*John 4:23-24*

*But the hour is coming, and is now here, when true worshipers will worship the Father in Spirit and truth; and indeed, the Father seeks such people to worship him. God is Spirit, and those who worship him must worship in Spirit and truth.*

## From the Mass, Source and Summit of Life

The Holy, Holy, Holy at Mass captures the idea of the holiness and transcendent nature of God. We are caught up in the vision of God and the worship of God in Heaven that transcends time and space. We are called to praise, adore, and worship our God who is all-holy.

Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God of hosts.

Heaven and earth are full of your glory.

Hosanna in the highest.

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

*(The Roman Missal)*

In the great praise of God in the Doxology, the celebrant makes the prayer through, with and in Christ, in union with the Holy Spirit, and presents this prayer to God. The people respond with the Great Amen!, affirming their participation and faith in the sacrifice of praise.

Through him, and with him, and in him, O God, almighty Father,  
in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all glory and honor is yours, for ever and ever. Amen!  
*(The Roman Missal)*

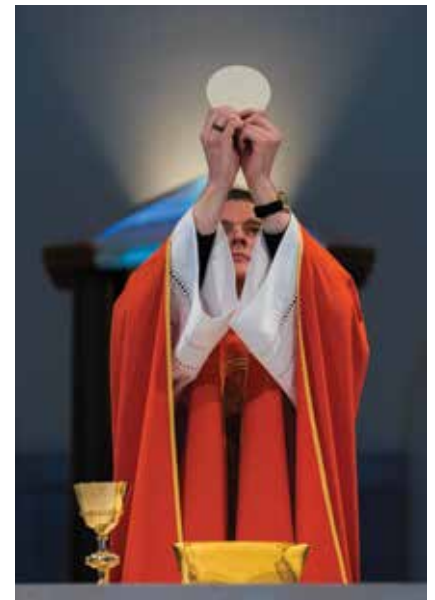
## From the Riches of Our Faith

Our society often reinforces within us an egocentric, overly individualistic worldview. It is all too easy for us to construct for ourselves a myth of being self-made men and women. We easily forget the Gospel truth that all is a gift and all is from God. We need to worship, in all humility, our Creator, who is all-holy, all-powerful, all-loving, and all-forgiving. He is our source, our sustenance and our goal.

"Jesus' gift of himself in the sacrament which is the memorial of his passion tells us that the success of our lives is found in our participation in the trinitarian life offered to us truly and definitively in him. The celebration and worship of the Eucharist enable us to draw near to God's love and to persevere in that love until we are united with the Lord whom we love. The offering of our lives, our fellowship with the whole community of believers and our solidarity with all men and women are essential aspects of... spiritual worship, holy and pleasing to God (Cf. Romans 12:1), which transforms every aspect of our human existence, to the glory of God" *(Sacramentum Caritatis, 94)*.

God demands worship from us, His creatures, whom He made and keeps in existence. The type of worship He demands is worship made "in spirit and in truth," communally offered in the Church, a renewal and re-presentation of the ultimate act of worship, the death of His Son on the Cross.

It has been said that the most perfect of prayers is also the simplest. Two words. "Thank you!" It is no coincidence that the Great Prayer of the Church is the same, the meaning of the word "Eucharist" is to "give thanks."



The greatest human activity is to worship God and give thanks for God's goodness. The world may see the worship of God through the Mass as something finite, yet the reality of the sacrifice of Christ allows the faithful to enter the infinite life of love of the Blessed Trinity.

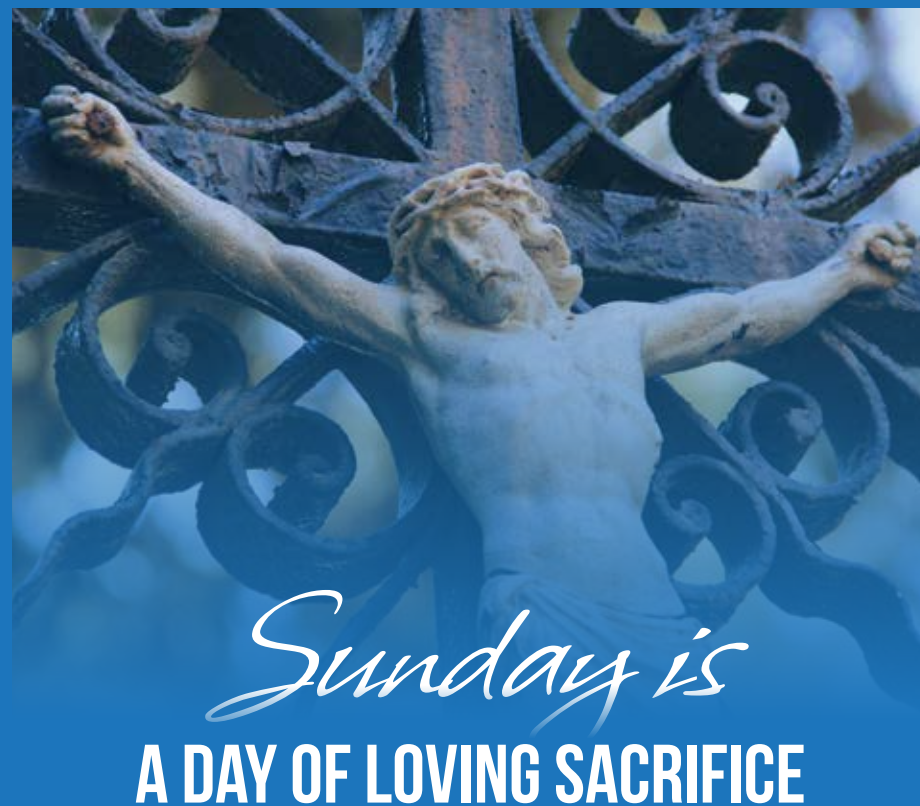
## Live It!

- Reflect on how you can order every part of your life to show that God is God and give Him your entire self. Give God your love, praise, and thanksgiving. As a family, talk about one main thing that struck each of you from the homily at Sunday Mass.
- Meditate on the aspects of Sunday worship that are most meaningful to you. Share your insights on worship with family and friends.
- Meditate upon a poem, symphony, opera, painting, sculpture, ballet, or other work of art and let your soul savor the majesty of God in the gift of Beauty.

## Sacred Scripture throughout the Week

- |                          |                                   |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1. 1 Chronicles 16:23-31 | Announce the Lord's salvation.    |
| 2. Isaiah 6:1-4          | Holy is the Lord.                 |
| 3. Isaiah 58:13-14       | Delight in the Lord.              |
| 4. Psalm 33:1-3          | Rejoice in the Lord.              |
| 5. Mark 11:15-19         | God's house is a house of prayer. |
| 6. Romans 12:1           | Offer yourself as worship.        |

*Remember, Sunday is a Day of Worship.*



## From Sacred Scripture

*1 Corinthians 11:23-25*

*For I received from the Lord what I also handed on to you, that the Lord Jesus, on the night he was handed over, took bread, and, after he had given thanks, broke it and said, "This is my body that is for you. Do this in remembrance of me." In the same way also the cup, after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me."*

## From the Mass, Source and Summit of Life

The Eucharistic prayer at Mass recalls the action of Jesus on the night before his death. He gave his disciples his Body and Blood in the form of bread and wine. At the anamnesis (or the remembering that makes present), the people recall the saving death and resurrection of the Lord. The priest prays that the Holy Spirit comes upon the people, and that in receiving Christ's Body and Blood (the Real Presence of Christ in the Blessed Sacrament), they may become a living offering to God.

"[Christ] is the true and eternal priest, who instituted the pattern of an everlasting sacrifice and was the first to offer himself as the saving Victim, commanding us to make this offering as his memorial. As we eat his flesh that was sacrificed for us, we are made strong, and as we drink his blood that was poured out for us, we are washed clean" (Preface I of the Most Holy Eucharist).

## From the Riches of Our Faith

In one sense, becoming a living offering means connecting our own suffering to the sufferings of Christ. It is an act of faith, trusting that just as the cross was not the end of the story for Jesus, it is not the end of the story for us. The love and mercy of God will prevail. On another level becoming a living offering means dedicating ourselves to lives of service and self-giving love. Sunday is a day to dedicate our lives to the ways of Jesus, who came not to be served but to serve: "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him might not perish but might have eternal life" (John 3:16).

"All that the Son of God did and taught for the reconciliation of the world is not simply known to us through the historical record of the past; we also experience it through the power of his present works...It is not only the courageous, glorious martyrs who share in his suffering; all the faithful who are reborn also share it, and do so in the very act of their rebirth. For when men renounce Satan and believe in God, when they pass from corruption to new life, when they lay aside the image of the earthly man and take on the form of the heavenly man, they go through a kind of death and resurrection. He who is received by Christ and receives Christ is not the same after baptism as before; the body of the reborn Christian becomes flesh of the Crucified Christ" (Pope Saint Leo the Great, Sermon 63, 6).



Note that "Sunday . . . is to be observed as the foremost holy day of obligation in the universal Church" (*Code of Canon Law*, can. 1246 § 1). In abstaining from Sunday labors, and in working to make certain others can rest, as well, along with offering to the Father with all the members of the Body of Christ the Sacrifice of Christ in the Holy Mass, Sunday is truly seen as a day of sacrifice.

Indeed, the Eucharist is a true sacrifice, not just a commemorative meal; the first Christians knew this and proclaimed it in their writings.

They recognized the sacrificial character of Jesus' instruction, "Do this in remembrance of me" (Cf. Luke 22:19, 1 Corinthians 11:24-25).

"You cannot pray at home as at church, where there is a great multitude, where exclamations are cried out to God as from one great heart, and where there is something more: the union of minds, the accord of souls, the bond of charity, the prayers of the priests" (CCC, 2179).

In the sacrifice of the Mass, we declare the Paschal Mystery, that is the suffering, death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus makes all the difference. Through the hands of the priest, Jesus the Lamb of Sacrifice willingly gives of Himself as an atonement for sin and we offer our own lives of sacrifice with our Blessed Lord to the glory of God the Father.

## Live it!

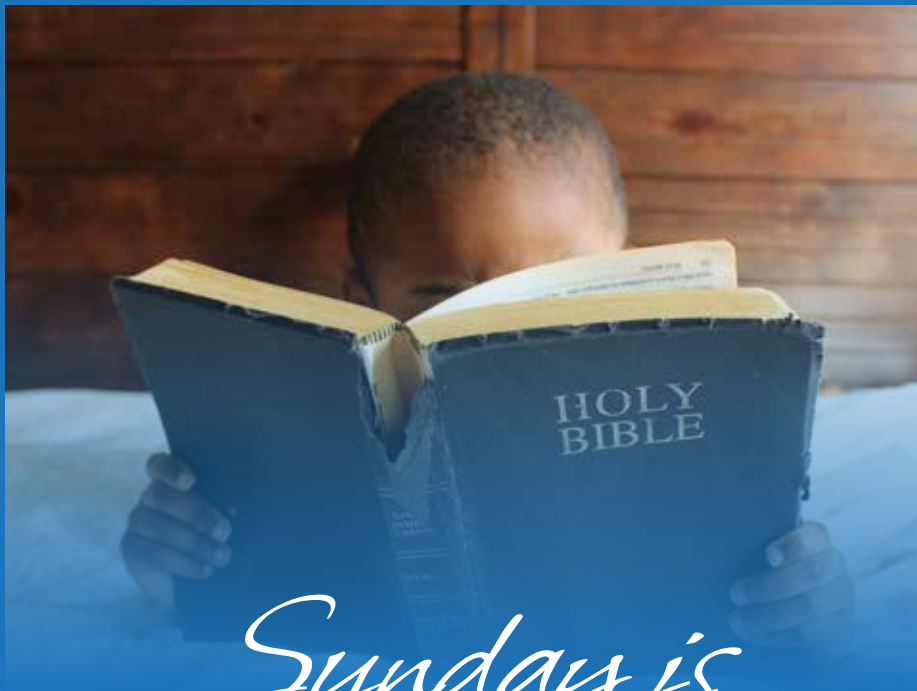
- What can you give up to make more space for God in your life? What can you give up to love Jesus?
- Take time to thank God for the opportunities to do things for others – for your family, friends, the Church, other organizations.
- Read a story about one of the Saints who gave up so much to follow the way of the Lord. Or, reminisce for a while upon someone holy in your own life who made sacrifices to improve things for you. If this hero is still alive, give him or her a phone call or send a note of thanks. If he or she has died, lift up a prayer of gratitude.

## Sacred Scripture throughout the Week

- |                       |   |
|-----------------------|---|
| 1. Matthew 6:9-13     | Give us this day our daily bread.                         |
| 2. Luke 22:19-20      | Do this in memory of me.                                  |
| 3. Acts 2:42, 44-47   | They devoted themselves to the breaking of the bread.     |
| 4. Philippians 2:5-11 | Jesus humbled himself and was obedient to God unto death. |
| 5. Hebrews 13:15-16   | Through Christ offer God a sacrifice of praise.           |
| 6. 1 Peter 1:17-19    | We are ransomed by the blood of Christ.                   |

*Remember, Sunday is a Day of Loving Sacrifice.*





# Sunday is A DAY OF FAMILY

## From Sacred Scripture

*Mark 3:33-35*

*But he said to them in reply, "Who are my mother and [my] brothers?" And looking around at those seated in the circle he said, "Here are my mother and my brothers. [For] whoever does the will of God is my brother and sister and mother."*

## From the Mass, Source and Summit of Life

The Lord's Prayer is our acknowledgment of God as "Our Father," and through it, we who are God's adopted children, God's family join our voices to ask God to provide for our needs, forgive us our sins, and bring us to the joy of his kingdom.

"Listen graciously to the prayers of this family, whom you have summoned before you: in your compassion, O merciful Father, gather to yourself all your children scattered throughout the world" (Eucharistic Prayer III).

## From the Riches of Our Faith

We, the baptized, are God's adopted sons and daughters. We seek to understand what it means for us to be brothers and sisters in Christ, a family of believers in the Church.

We also realize the importance of the domestic Church – praying together as a family, attending Mass together, and being together as a family unit on the Lord's Day.

"The demands of work can't bully people out of needed time off" and "Sunday must be a day of rest for everyone, so people can be free to be with their families and with God." Furthermore, "By defending Sunday, one defends human freedom," said Pope Emeritus Benedict (Catholic News Service June 6, 2012).

"This is the day which the LORD has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it" (Psalm 118:24) and our Sunday rest allows us time and space to enter into a period of family recreation and refreshment, limited not only to our nuclear families at home, but also in a spirit of charity and unity with the parish family, and, ultimately, with the whole Church, visible in common fraternity and worship of Almighty God.

## Live it!

- Set aside time to be with family on Sundays, share a meal as a household, and engage in recreation together. Is there a family member you haven't connected with for a while? Take the time to call, text, email, or contact the person in some way.
- Think of a strength or gift that each family member possesses and give thanks to God for that person.
- Take time during the week to read and reflect on the readings for the upcoming Sunday and discuss as a family.

## Sacred Scripture throughout the Week

- |                       |  |
|-----------------------|--|
| 1. Deuteronomy 5:16   | Honor your father and mother.                        |
| 2. Isaiah 66:13       | As a mother comforts her child God will comfort you. |
| 3. Matthew 2:13-15    | Saint Joseph takes Jesus and Mary to Egypt.          |
| 4. Luke 2:22-38       | Jesus is presented in the temple.                    |
| 5. Luke 18:16-17      | Jesus says let the children come to him.             |
| 6. Colossians 3:12-14 | As God's chosen ones put on love above all else.     |

*Remember, Sunday is a Day of Family.*



# Sunday is A DAY OF MISSION

## From Sacred Scripture

*Matthew 28:19-20*

*Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age.*

## From the Mass, Source and Summit of Life

*"Ite, missa est,"* means literally "Go, it has been sent," carrying the meaning "Go, you are sent." We are sent to bring the fruits of the Eucharist to the world. There are several options for the dismissal of the assembly from Mass each of them having substantial meaning and direct us toward the mission of the Church.

Go forth, the Mass is ended.

Go and announce the Gospel of the Lord.

Go in peace, glorifying the Lord by your life.

Go in peace.

*(The Roman Missal)*

## From the Riches of Our Faith

Each Sunday we hear the Good News proclaimed – God's own communication of love and mercy. Each Sunday we receive the Body of Christ to become the Body of Christ in this world. At the end of Mass, the celebrant sends us forth on a mission to proclaim the Good News with our lives, and to be Good News for others by being instruments of God's love. Evangelization is all about proclaiming the Good News of the salvation of Christ to the world. We do it through word, action and attitude.

From the sustaining banquet of the Eucharist, where worship has been rendered to God, we are sent to "be" Christ for the whole world. The Eucharist, source and summit of the life of the Church, does not exhaust all the Church's endeavors, as the Second Vatican Council teaches. We must become what we receive, and cooperate with His plan for the salvation of the whole world.

The announcements after the Mass should not just be fodder for the bulletin but marching orders for mission in the world.

"Of course, all of us are called to mature in our work as evangelizers. We want to have better training, a deepening love and a clearer witness to the Gospel. In this sense, we ought to let others be constantly evangelizing us. But this does not mean that we should postpone the evangelizing mission; rather, each of us should find ways to communicate Jesus wherever we are. All of us are called to offer others an explicit witness to the saving love of the Lord, who despite our imperfections offers us his closeness, his word and his strength, and gives meaning to our lives. In your heart you know that it is not the same to live without him; what you have come to realize, what has helped you to live and given you hope, is what you also need to communicate to others" (*Evangelli Gaudium*, 121).

---

*The celebrant sends us forth  
on a mission to proclaim the Good News  
with our lives, and to be Good News  
for others by being instruments  
of God's love.*

---



## Live It!

- Fall in love with Jesus and live as His disciple. This means helping another person do the same. Who in your life needs to know of God's great love for them? Can you bring a meal to a neighbor or sit and visit with them? Reflect and give thanks for the ways you can "serve" others.
- What does, "Go in peace, glorifying the Lord by your life," mean for you at this point in your life? Discuss and plan a "Family Service Project" based on the message you heard in the homily delivered at the Mass you attended. Some service opportunities include Catholic Charities, the St. Vincent de Paul Society, and Capuchins Community Service.
- Spend some time as a family going through a newspaper, news magazine, or a news program on television or online and choose a story that the whole family agrees needs special prayer. Dedicate some time to offering some prayers and intercession for this cause.

### Sacred Scripture throughout the Week

- |                       |   |
|-----------------------|---|
| 1. 1 Chronicles 16:24 | Declare God's glory among the nations.              |
| 2. Isaiah 6:8-9       | Whom shall I send?                                  |
| 3. Isaiah 52:7        | Announce salvation.                                 |
| 4. Matthew 9:37-38    | The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few. |
| 5. Mark 16:15         | Go and proclaim the Gospel.                         |
| 6. Acts 1:8           | You will be my witnesses.                           |

*Remember, Sunday is a Day of Mission.*



### From Sacred Scripture

*John 17:20-23*

*I pray not only for them, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, so that they may all be one, as you, Father, are in me and I in you, that they also may be in us, that the world may believe that you sent me. And I have given them the glory you gave me, so that they may be one, as we are one, I in them and you in me, that they may be brought to perfection as one, that the world may know that you sent me, and that you loved them even as you loved me.*

### From the Mass, Source and Summit of Life

Receiving Communion at the Eucharistic Table is a sign of Unity in the Body of Christ.

"Humbly we pray that, partaking of the Body and Blood of Christ, we may be gathered into one by the Holy Spirit" (Eucharistic Prayer II).



## From the Riches of Our Faith

Parishes gather people who think about things differently, experience life differently, and live their lives differently, yet can meet around the same Eucharistic table despite their differences and receive the Body and Blood of the Lord together. Any movement toward unity that takes place in parishes has its origins in the Eucharistic feast. Different people with one faith sharing in one meal are drawn closer to one another in Holy Communion.

Only the Holy Spirit through the grace of the celebration of the Eucharist could bring together in the same pew a bank president, a person who lives on the street, a single mother with a rambunctious toddler and two fashionable urbane millennials.

From the moment, myrrh bearers found Christ's empty tomb, Sunday was known as the Lord's Day. By definition, each Sunday is a call to Christian unity since it is on this day that we are called to communion with the Lord, by the Lord. Despite all of the challenges that have tugged at the threads of Christian unity, the Lord's Day remains the one, unassailable marker of Christian unity since it is on this day that all of us, despite our many differences, gather together as believers in Christ.

"If you wish to be the body of Christ and His members, your mystery lies on the Lord's table, you receive your mystery...For you bear the body of Christ and you answer Amen. Be therefore a member of Christ's body in order that your Amen may be true" (Saint Augustine, Sermon 272).

"The celebration of Sunday observes the moral commandment inscribed by nature in the human heart to render to God an outward, visible, public, and regular worship 'as a sign of his universal beneficence to all.'

---

*Only the Holy Spirit ... could bring together in the same pew a bank president, a person who lives on the street, a single mother and two fashionable urbane millennials.*

---



Sunday worship fulfills the moral command of the Old Covenant, taking up its rhythm and spirit in the weekly celebration of the Creator and Redeemer of his people" (CCC, 2176).

In communal worship of the Most Holy Trinity, the Church fulfills the law written in the heart of each human being by the Creator Himself. Together, unified in doctrine and in worship, we present to the Father the gift given us by the Son: His very life, on behalf of all and for the salvation of all, until He returns.

## Live It!

- What can you do to bring our unity in the Eucharist beyond the walls of our Church? What can you do to work for the common good of all God's children?
- Where do you find a lack of unity in your life? It may be with a person or group of people. Pray for that person or group of people as well as an understanding for yourself.
- Engage in a conversation with someone and actively listen to them so the other person feels heard and understood.

## Sacred Scripture throughout the Week

- |                           |   |
|---------------------------|---|
| 1. Psalm 133:1            | How good it is when God's people live in unity. |
| 2. John 15:5, 7-9         | Remain in my love.                              |
| 3. Romans 12:4-8          | Many parts in one body.                         |
| 4. 1 Corinthians 10:16-17 | We are one body.                                |
| 5. Ephesians 4:1-6        | Preserve unity through the bond of peace.       |
| 6. Philippians 2:1-2      | Complete my joy by being of the same mind.      |

*Remember, Sunday is a Day of Unity.*



# Sunday is OUR FIRST DAY

## From Sacred Scripture

*1 Corinthians 15:20-27*

*But now Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. For since death came through a human being, the resurrection of the dead came also through a human being. For just as in Adam all die, so too in Christ shall all be brought to life, but each one in proper order: Christ the firstfruits; then, at his coming, those who belong to Christ; then comes the end, when he hands over the kingdom to his God and Father, when he has destroyed every sovereignty and every authority and power. For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy to be destroyed is death, for "he subjected everything under his feet."*

## From the Mass, Source and Summit of Life

The Prayer after Communion asks that the benefits of the Eucharist remain active in our lives. We begin our week with faith in God's presence and saving help, knowing His grace will sustain us through the week and our lives.

"Be near to those who call on you, O Lord, and graciously grant your protection to all who place their hope in your mercy, that they may remain faithful in holiness of life and, having enough for their needs in this world, they may be made full heirs of your promise for eternity. Through Christ our Lord" (*The Roman Missal: Prayers Over the People*).

## From the Riches of Our Faith

Sunday is the first day, a day of new life, a day that inspires hope, a day that launches us into a new week and new opportunities to share God's love. The decision is yours. You can make Sunday the last day of a weekend or truly make Sunday the Lord's Day, an intentional beginning to a new week abundant in the promise of meaning, purpose and value.

With all of the commemorations Sunday holds for the faithful, it is also the "first day" in the sense of understanding our mission. We cooperate with Christ and His grace in the salvation of the world. Each Sunday provides us the grace to begin that task anew: to recall and repent of our sins, to be fed at the table of Word and Sacrament, and to venture out on the great mission He Himself authorized: "Preach the Gospel to every creature." Sunday provides us the "spring-board" and the sustenance to carry out that work with the Lord and with His holy Church.

The power of Sunday is in the rest it provides, not the work it produces; in receptivity, not in activity; in its celebratory affirmation of the deeply ordered goodness of creation, all of which nurtures our relationship with Christ. Its power is in moving us from a focus on ability, talent, achievement, and calculating results, and toward the healthy and necessary realization of what is done to and for us – all that can only be received and accepted – and ultimately toward the grace that points us to what is authentically human, to who we should be. It is a holy time, not for us to work on things but for God to work on us.



## Live It!

- Failing to plan is planning to fail. How will you order your life so that you live first things first? How are you called to reorient your life to live as if God matters? Consider how you spend your time and your money.
- During the week, think back to the main message from Sunday's readings and homily. Do you remember it? How are you living it out? What does it inspire you to do differently the rest of the week?
- Sunday sets the tone for the rest of the week. Put the lessons gleaned from Sunday worship (mercy, charity, peace, unity, etc.) into practice at work, at home and in the community.

### Sacred Scripture throughout the Week

- |                       |  |
|-----------------------|--|
| 1. Isaiah 25:9        | Let us rejoice and be glad for God has saved us. |
| 2. Isaiah 60:1        | The glory of the Lord has dawned upon you.       |
| 3. Mark 16:2-6        | He has been raised.                              |
| 4. Romans 13:11-14    | Put on the Lord Jesus Christ.                    |
| 5. 2 Corinthians 5:17 | Whoever is in Christ is a new creation.          |
| 6. Hebrews 10:25      | We should not stay away from the assembly.       |

*Remember, Sunday is Our First Day.*



