
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).

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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,

+ Jerome E. Listecki
Archbishop of Milwaukee

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