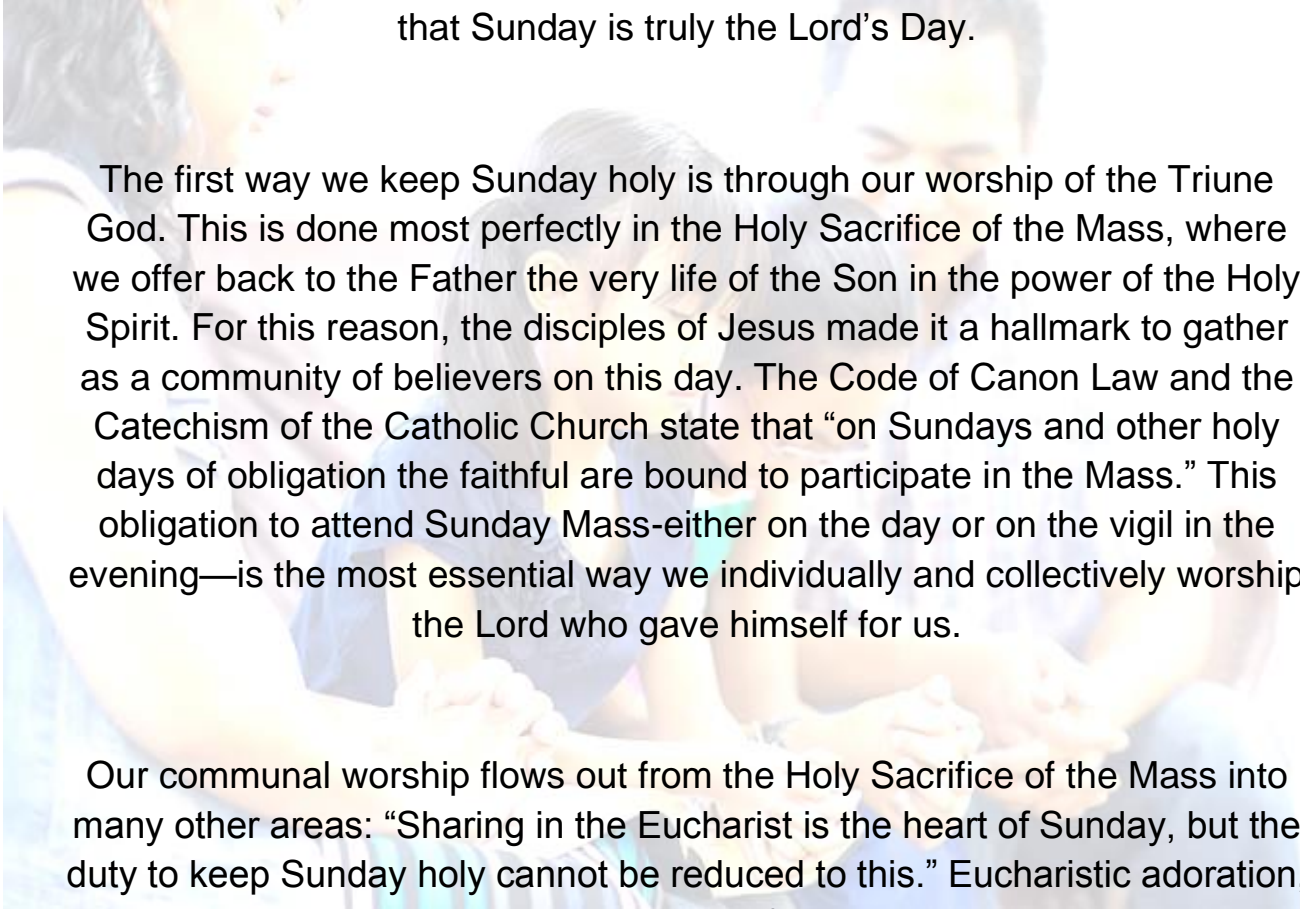


## SUNDAY - THE DAY OF THE LORD

Sunday is the day of the Resurrection of Jesus to new life. It is the day that definitively marked Jesus' victory over sin and death, and it is the day that represents that in Jesus we too share in this same victory through our baptism. Therefore, Sunday is not an ordinary day, not just another day of the week. Every Sunday is a 'mini-Easter Sunday"! It is right then to say that Sunday is truly the Lord's Day.

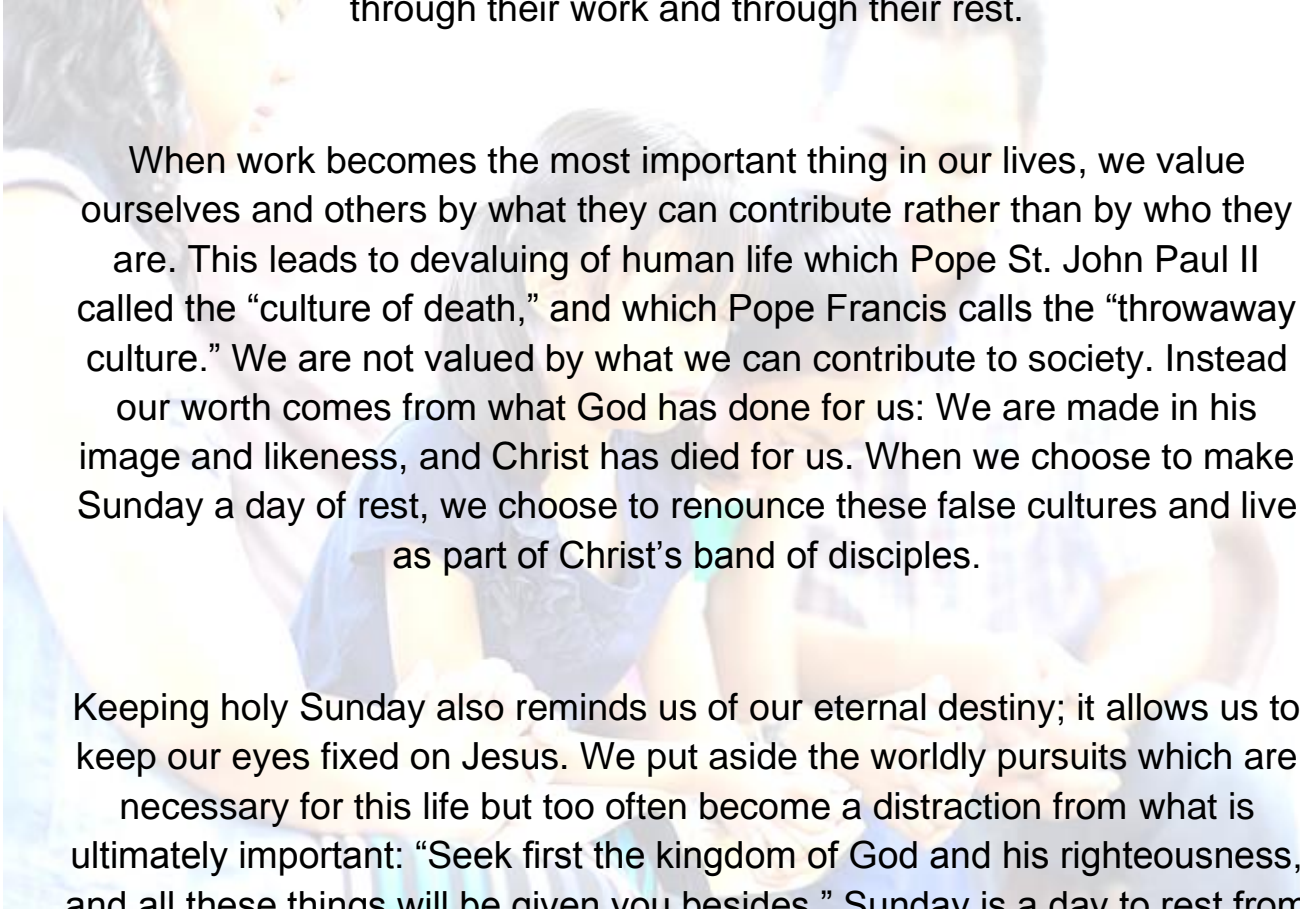


The first way we keep Sunday holy is through our worship of the Triune God. This is done most perfectly in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, where we offer back to the Father the very life of the Son in the power of the Holy Spirit. For this reason, the disciples of Jesus made it a hallmark to gather as a community of believers on this day. The Code of Canon Law and the Catechism of the Catholic Church state that “on Sundays and other holy days of obligation the faithful are bound to participate in the Mass.” This obligation to attend Sunday Mass—either on the day or on the vigil in the evening—is the most essential way we individually and collectively worship the Lord who gave himself for us.

Our communal worship flows out from the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass into many other areas: “Sharing in the Eucharist is the heart of Sunday, but the duty to keep Sunday holy cannot be reduced to this.” Eucharistic adoration, personal prayer, reciting the Rosary, time for catechesis and Bible studies, faith sharing groups and the like all are ways families and individuals honor the Lord's Day beyond Sunday Mass. We are called to live this whole day in recognition that we are God's people, intimately united to him through the blood of Jesus, in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Our rest on this day also imitates the first “rest” of God after the work of

creation: “he rested on the seventh day from all the work he had undertaken.” God teaches us the value of work — through creation, in the very life of Jesus and in the lives of the saints — but he also teaches us the value of rest. Too often in our world we are valued by how busy we are. This “cult of busyness” is not of the Lord. Taking the Lord’s Day not to be busy with the affairs of the world but rather to rest in more important pursuits honors God and helps us to show him more perfectly to our world. The world needs men and women who can manifest the presence of God through their work and through their rest.



When work becomes the most important thing in our lives, we value ourselves and others by what they can contribute rather than by who they are. This leads to devaluing of human life which Pope St. John Paul II called the “culture of death,” and which Pope Francis calls the “throwaway culture.” We are not valued by what we can contribute to society. Instead our worth comes from what God has done for us: We are made in his image and likeness, and Christ has died for us. When we choose to make Sunday a day of rest, we choose to renounce these false cultures and live as part of Christ’s band of disciples.

Keeping holy Sunday also reminds us of our eternal destiny; it allows us to keep our eyes fixed on Jesus. We put aside the worldly pursuits which are necessary for this life but too often become a distraction from what is ultimately important: “Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given you besides.” Sunday is a day to rest from work so that we have the time and leisure to pursue things that do not have worldly utility. Unless we take this regular time away from these matters, we will easily and quickly lose sight of our ultimate destiny. Our attention needs to be intentionally interrupted from our earthly work to call to mind the reality that we are joint heirs with Christ of the things of heaven.

Sunday is also a day when families can be together. It should be a time set aside from many other good activities so that families can be together, free from other distractions. Some of the particular aspects of Sunday family time include family Scripture time, the family Rosary, making use of parish activities together as a family and “reclaiming Sunday” through Mass and a shared meal. For some families, this time together has been marked by “technology-free family time” on Sunday, when parents and children set aside their phones and other devices and commit to spending uninterrupted family time together.

Finally, Sunday is the day when the Holy Spirit was poured out in power upon the disciples of Jesus. In fact, John Paul II called Sunday a “weekly Pentecost.” Therefore, Sunday is a fitting day to grow in our faith. Catechesis for young people and for adults is not out of place on this day. It also is a day to witness to our faith. That first Pentecost saw the apostles boldly proclaiming Jesus as Lord. As we seek to live a new Pentecost, we should be witnesses to God’s mercy, particularly on the Lord’s Day. This means we should look for opportunities to share our faith with others on this day. We do this in our words of kindness, by sharing our faith with others and through works of charity, especially to the less fortunate.

Living Sunday more radically and intentionally as God’s people will help us to root our lives in prayer and the sacraments. And it will remind us of God’s presence even in difficult and stressful times, so that we can be Jesus’ band of joyful missionary disciples in today’s world.