

Doctrinal Session

APPRENTICES IN FAITH: A Resource for the OCIA
Third Commandment: Keep Holy the Lord's Day

Remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and the LORD your God brought you out from there; . . . therefore the LORD your God commanded you to keep the sabbath day. (Deuteronomy 5:15)

Insight

What parts of your weekly schedule do you observe without fail? Why?

Tommy's dad knocked lightly on the bedroom door and said, "Time to get up and get ready." Thirty minutes later, Tommy clumped resentfully down the stairs, complaining, "I told you. I don't like church. It's boring."

Tommy's father responded, "Come on, Tommy. We have been through this before. You are a part of this family. You live in this house. And this family goes to Mass on Sunday."

Tommy tried to interrupt, but his dad continued, "It's what we do. Sure, there might be parts of Mass you feel are boring because they happen every week, over and over. But there will be something at some point in the Mass—a word, a song, a gesture—that will resonate if you are paying attention.

"You get up every school morning at 5:00 a.m. to work out. Is that exciting? I know you challenge yourself to go there too, but you go because it prepares you for future track meets. Sunday Mass is like that. We set aside the time because it prepares us . . . for life."

For Reflection . . .

The parish is the ordinary place where the household of God gathers to celebrate Sunday Mass.

What activities do you do in community?

Why is gathering together so important for human beings?

Additional Background

Catechism of the Catholic Church: 2168–2195

United States Catholic Catechism for Adults: pages 363–371

Compendium—Catechism of the Catholic Church: 450–454

Church Teaching

Creation and Liberation

The Third Commandment (see Exodus 31:15) points to the sabbath as a *day of refreshment*, made holy by God's resting on the seventh day of creation (see Genesis 2:2). This scriptural account does not imply that God was inactive on this day. Rather, he contemplated all he had made and judged it to be good.

This seventh "day" of rest underscores the fullness of God's work in creating, a gaze of love that the Creator casts upon us, his creation. Scripture also refers to the sabbath day as a remembrance of God's mighty power in liberating Israel from bondage (see Deuteronomy 5:15).

From Sabbath to Sunday

The Third Commandment enjoins us to rest and remember. Christians thus established the Lord's Day, or Sunday—the first day of the week when Christ rose from the dead—as *the* festival day. On it we celebrate our origin, the culmination of Salvation History, and the anticipation of the world's fulfillment. We recall, commemorate, and celebrate our Redemption through the Paschal Mystery of Jesus Christ.

The Lord's Day, Sunday, is therefore the first day of the new creation in Christ. As the week unfolds, it not only follows the sabbath, but its celebration fulfills the spiritual truth of the Jewish sabbath. It proclaims humanity's eternal rest in God. Sunday worship punctuates the week, taking up the spirit of the Third Commandment to set aside, make holy, and keep a particular day in celebration of God, Creator and Redeemer.