national bulletin on Liturgy

The Lord's Day, Our Day Part One
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On Pentecost of 1998, in order to assist the whole Church in preparing to celebrate the Jubilee Year 2000 and to enter the third millennium, Pope John Paul II issued an apostolic letter entitled Dies Domini ("Day of the Lord" or "The Lord's Day"), in which he places before us a rich understanding of Sunday and its place in the Christian life. The letter offers the Church in Canada an opportunity to reflect on the treasure we have in Sunday and to re-examine our Sunday practice.

To help with this process, Bulletins #156 and #157 present the text of the letter along with helpful commentary and questions to stimulate thinking, discussion and action in communities across the country. The text has been reformatted in easier-to-read sense lines. Each of the pope’s footnotes is included on the page to which it refers. The language, capitalization and punctuation of the Vatican’s English translation have been maintained. (Dies Domini is also available from the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops in a running text format with endnotes.)

It is our hope that Dies Domini will become an integral part of the nation’s preparations for the Great Jubilee of the Year 2000. Bulletins #156 and #157 are ideal for use by various groups (priests, deacons, lay liturgical ministers, pastoral workers, parish staffs, small faith communities, and other parish organizations), as a way of focussing energy around the day upon which our lives, individually and together, are centred. Like the letter itself, the commentary and questions in these two Bulletins are aimed at enabling us to work together at naming and claiming, or perhaps reclaiming, Sunday as the Lord’s Day and our day.

Keeping Sunday holy in the social and economic climate of today is no easy task. Bulletin #157 will highlight some ways in which Canadian Catholics are already answering the call to keep Sunday holy. We are optimistic that, in gathering around this significant document, local communities will grow stronger together and will arrive at practical strategies for mutual support.

In addition to the material on Dies Domini, three new regular feature items are introduced in Bulletin #156. In “From the Regions,” the regional liturgical conferences will keep us informed of their work throughout the year. “From the National Office” will present documents recently made available by the office and will keep us up-to-date on national projects. “The Last Word,” found, of course, on the last page of each issue, will be reserved for comments from members of the Episcopal Commission for Liturgy. The Bulletin will continue to include reviews of books that are of interest to all who are concerned about the continuing liturgical renewal.

Thanks Zita!
Former National Bulletin editor, Sister Zita Maier, has returned to Saskatchewan to work on the leadership team of the Ursulines of Bruno, Saskatchewan and to serve as associate editor of the Prairie Messenger. Zita’s fine work in redesigning the National Bulletin has served the publication well and for this reason the “look” will remain untouched by the new editor. Another mammoth task that Zita took on was the updating of the index (Bulletin #151). This has made my work (and, probably, that of many readers) much easier. Acting on her advice, we will include an annual index update in the winter issue of each volume. (See Bulletin #155, pp. 251-255.) My thanks and admiration go to Zita for her work on the Bulletin and her kind assistance as I stepped into this job. Zita, along with Frank Henderson and Patrick Byrne, has left giant shoes for me to fill.
My esteemed Brothers in the Episcopate and the Priesthood,
Dear Brothers and Sisters!

1. The Lord’s Day —
as Sunday was called from Apostolic times'—
has always been accorded special attention in the history of the Church
because of its close connection with the very core of the Christian mystery.

In fact,
in the weekly reckoning of time
Sunday recalls the day of Christ’s Resurrection.
It is Easter that returns week by week,
celebrating Christ’s victory over sin and death,
the fulfillment in him of the first creation
and the dawn of “the new creation” (cf. 2 Cor 5:17).

It is the day
that recalls in grateful adoration the world’s first day
and looks forward in active hope to “the last day”,
when Christ will come in glory (cf. Acts 1:11; 1 Th 4:13-17)
and all things will be made new (cf. Rev 21:5).

Rightly, then,
the Psalmist’s cry is applied to Sunday:
“This is the day that the Lord has made:
let us rejoice and be glad in it” (Ps 118:24).

This invitation to joy,
which the Easter liturgy makes its own,
reflects the astonishment that came over the women
who, having seen the crucifixion of Christ,
found the tomb empty
when they went there “very early on the first day after the Sabbath”
(Mk 16:2).

It is an invitation
to relive in some way the experience of the two disciples of Emmaus,
who felt their hearts “burn within them”
as the Risen One walked with them on the road,
explaining the Scriptures
and revealing himself in “the breaking of the bread” (cf. Lk 24:32,35).

And it echoes the joy —
at first uncertain and then overwhelming —

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1 Cf. Rev 1:10: “Kyriáke hēmêna”; cf. also the Didaché 14, 1, Saint Ignatius of Antioch, To the Magnesians 9, 1-2; SC 10, 88-89.
which the Apostles experienced on the evening of that same day, when they were visited by the Risen Jesus and received the gift of His peace and of His Spirit (cf. Jn 20:19-23).

2. The Resurrection of Jesus is the fundamental event upon which Christian faith rests (cf. 1 Cor 15:14).

It is an astonishing reality,

fully grasped in the light of faith, yet historically attested to by those who were privileged to see the Risen Lord.

It is a wondrous event that is not only absolutely unique in human history, but which lies at the very heart of the mystery of time.

In fact, “all time belongs to Christ and all the ages”, as the evocative liturgy of the Easter Vigil recalls in preparing the Paschal Candle.

Therefore,
in commemorating the day of Christ’s Resurrection not just once a year but every Sunday, the Church seeks to indicate to every generation the true fulcrum of history, to which the mystery of the world’s origin and its final destiny leads.

It is right, therefore, to claim, in the words of a fourth century homily, that “the Lord’s Day” is “the Lord of days”.²

Those who have received the grace of faith in the Risen Lord cannot fail to grasp the significance of this day of the week with the same deep emotion which led Saint Jerome to say: “Sunday is the day of the Resurrection, it is the day of Christians, it is our day”.³

For Christians,

Sunday is “the fundamental feastday”,⁴ established not only to mark the succession of time but to reveal time’s deeper meaning.

3. The fundamental importance of Sunday has been recognized through two thousand years of history and was emphatically restated by the Second Vatican Council:

“Every seven days, the Church celebrates the Easter mystery. This is a tradition going back to the Apostles, taking its origin from the actual day of Christ’s Resurrection—a day thus appropriately designated ‘the Lord’s Day’.”⁵

Paul VI emphasized this importance once more when he approved the new General Roman Calendar and the Universal Norms that regulate the ordering of the Liturgical Year.⁶

The coming of the Third Millennium, which calls believers to reflect upon the course of history in the light of Christ,

³ In Die Dominica Paschae II, 52: CCL 78, 550.
⁴ Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy Sacrosanctum Concilium, 106.
⁵ Ibid.

⁶ National Bulletin on Liturgy
also invites them
to rediscover with new intensity the meaning of Sunday:
its "mystery", its celebration, its significance for Christian and human life.

I note with pleasure
that in the years since the Council
this important theme has prompted
not only many interventions by you,
dear Brother Bishops, as teachers of the faith,
but also different pastoral strategies which —
with the support of your clergy —
you have developed either individually or jointly.

On the threshold of the Great Jubilee of the Year 2000,
it has been my wish to offer you this Apostolic Letter
in order to support your pastoral efforts in this vital area.

But at the same time
I wish to turn to all of you, Christ's faithful,
as though I were spiritually present in all the communities
in which you gather with your Pastors each Sunday
to celebrate the Eucharist and "the Lord's Day".

Many of the insights and intuitions which prompt this Apostolic Letter
have grown from my episcopal service in Krakow and,
since the time when I assumed the ministry of Bishop of Rome
and Successor of Peter,
in the visits to the Roman parishes
which I have made regularly
on the Sundays of the different seasons of the Liturgical Year.

I see this Letter
as continuing the lively exchange
that I am always happy to have with the faithful,
as I reflect with you on the meaning of Sunday
and underline the reasons for living Sunday as truly "the Lord's Day",
also in the changing circumstances of our own times.

4. Until quite recently,
it was easier in traditionally
Christian countries to keep Sunday holy
because it was an almost universal practice
and because, even in the organization of civil society,
Sunday rest was considered a fixed part of the work schedule.

Today, however,
even in those countries that give legal sanction
to the festive character of Sunday,
changes in socioeconomic conditions
have often led to profound modifications of social behavior
and hence of the character of Sunday.

The custom of the "weekend" has become more widespread,
a weekly period of respite,
spent perhaps far from home
and often involving participation in cultural, political or sporting activities
that are usually held on free days.

This social and cultural phenomenon is by no means without its positive aspects
if, while respecting true values,
it can contribute to people's development
and to the advancement of the life of society as a whole.
DIES DOMINI

All of this responds not only to the need for rest, but also to the need for celebration that is inherent in our humanity. Unfortunately, when Sunday loses its fundamental meaning and becomes merely part of a "weekend", it can happen that people stay locked within a horizon so limited that they can no longer see "the heavens".

Hence, though ready to celebrate, they are really incapable of doing so.

The disciples of Christ, however, are asked to avoid any confusion between the celebration of Sunday, which should truly be a way of keeping the Lord's Day holy, and the "weekend", understood as a time of simple rest and relaxation. This will require a genuine spiritual maturity, which will enable Christians to "be what they are", in full accordance with the gift of faith, always ready to give an account of the hope that is in them (cf. 1 Pt 3:15).

In this way, they will be led to a deeper understanding of Sunday, with the result that, even in difficult situations, they will be able to live it in complete docility to the Holy Spirit.

5. From this perspective, the situation appears somewhat mixed. On the one hand, there is the example of some young Churches, which show how fervently Sunday can be celebrated, whether in urban areas or in widely scattered villages.

By contrast, in other parts of the world, because of the sociological pressures already noted, and perhaps because the motivation of faith is weak, the percentage of those attending the Sunday liturgy is strikingly low.

In the minds of many of the faithful, not only the sense of the centrality of the Eucharist but even the sense of the duty to give thanks to the Lord and to pray to him with others in the community of the Church, seems to be diminishing.

It is also true that both in mission countries and in countries evangelized long ago the lack of priests is such that the celebration of the Sunday Eucharist cannot always be guaranteed in every community.

7 Cf. Pastoral Note of the Italian Episcopal Conference "Il giorno del Signore" (15 July 1984), 5: Enchiridion CEI 3, 1398.

8 National Bulletin on Liturgy
6. Given this array of new situations and the questions which they prompt, it seems more necessary than ever to recover the deep doctrinal foundations underlying the Church's precept, so that the abiding value of Sunday in the Christian life will be clear to all the faithful. In doing this, we follow in the footsteps of the age-old tradition of the Church, powerfully restated by the Second Vatican Council in its teaching that on Sunday "Christian believers should come together, in order to commemorate the suffering, Resurrection and glory of the Lord Jesus, by hearing God's Word and sharing the Eucharist, and to give thanks to God who has given them new birth to a living hope through the Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead (cf. 1 Pt 1:3)."

7. The duty to keep Sunday holy, especially by sharing in the Eucharist and by relaxing in a spirit of Christian joy and fraternity, is easily understood if we consider the many different aspects of this day upon which the present Letter will focus our attention.

Sunday is a day that is at the very heart of the Christian life. From the beginning of my Pontificate, I have not ceased to repeat: "Do not be afraid! Open, open wide the doors to Christ!"

In the same way, today I would strongly urge everyone to rediscover Sunday: Do not be afraid to give your time to Christ! Yes, let us open our time to Christ, that he may cast light upon it and give it direction. He is the One who knows the secret of time and the secret of eternity, and he gives us "his day" as an ever new gift of his love.

The rediscovery of this day is a grace that we must implore, not only so that we may live the demands of faith to the full, but also so that we may respond concretely to the deepest human yearnings. Time given to Christ is never time lost, but is rather time gained, so that our relationships and indeed our whole life may become more profoundly human.

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8 Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy Sacrosanctum Concilium, 106.
9 "Homily for the Solemn Inauguration of the Pontificate" (22 October 1978), 5: AAS 70 (1978), 947.
In these opening paragraphs John Paul II offers a thumbnail sketch of the theology of Sunday that he will unfold in more detail in the main body of the letter. As the day on which Christ was raised from the dead, Sunday is given pride of place among all other days. Is this easier said than done?

Sunday and Weekend

John Paul raises an interesting point when he speaks of Sunday getting lost in the “weekend.” In many places in North American society there is often little one cannot do on Sunday. Gone are the days when large cities rolled up the sidewalks on the Lord’s Day. Yet even if this were still the case, the danger of the blurring of Sunday within the weekend remains.

Local Catholic communities have often inadvertently contributed to the blurring of the distinctiveness of Sunday. In many places the phrase “weekend masses” is used to encompass the entire schedule of celebrations that fulfill the Lord’s Day obligation. In an environment where the appreciation of the Lord’s Day is often quite tenuous, use of such language may be pastorally unwise. Language does not only express meaning, it creates it. If loose lips sink ships, this loose use of language is torpedoing the Sunday ship.

In many cases we have failed to catechize adequately around the reason why we are able to include Saturday evening celebrations in our Lord’s Day schedules. According to the General Norms for the Liturgical Year and the Calendar, “The observance of Sunday and solemnities begins with the evening of the preceding day.” This partially explains why Sunday is assigned two celebrations of evening prayer: Evening Prayer I, celebrated on Saturday evening (marking the opening of the Lord’s Day), and Evening Prayer II, celebrated on Sunday evening (closing our celebration of the Lord’s Day). Admittedly, Church law allows Lord’s Day celebrations to begin as early as 4:00 PM on Saturdays. (Indeed, this may be the onset of evening in the darkest months of winter.) However, some communities stretch the boundaries of Sunday to or beyond the limit by regularly, and sometimes unnecessarily, celebrating Sunday eucharist on Saturday afternoon long before it would be an appropriate hour at which to celebrate evening prayer. If it’s too early to celebrate evening prayer, is it not too early to celebrate Sunday eucharist? Perhaps our neglect of parish celebrations of evening prayer has left us insensitive to an honest liturgical sense of “evening.”

John Paul’s remarks are especially important to those who would blur the significance of Sunday by accepting attendance at mass on any other day of the week as a fitting substitute for full, conscious and active participation in the community’s Sunday eucharist. Under such a scheme, the assembly of the Church on Sunday takes a back seat to the individual’s personal convenience. The eucharist becomes dislodged from its natural environment and context. In addition, this “one hour — any hour — a week for God”
mentality further diminishes the impact and importance of Sunday and eucharist in our lives by removing the celebration of eucharist from the context of rest, fellowship and joy which the Christian Sunday offers. The resulting weakening of the bond between eucharist, Sunday and Church distorts our understanding of all three. Eucharist becomes “my mass”; Sunday fades into the weekend; and the Church becomes an organization one belongs to by virtue of holding a baptismal certificate.

Other Matters
All of history finds its centre in the resurrection of Christ. Everything before it points to and leads up to it. Everything after flows from it. Therefore, all time finds its meaning in the resurrection. Even before the Church celebrated the great annual festival of Easter, it celebrated the Lord's Supper each Sunday as the proclamation of the paschal mystery of Christ. All the consequences of the resurrection have become a part of the meaning of Sunday as well. Because of this, joy is a fundamental, essential characteristic of Sunday. The spirituality of Sunday is to be a spirituality of joy.

For the Christian, Sunday rest is a unique gift. John Paul's comments here and throughout the letter make it clear that, far from being an arbitrary rule compelling blind obedience, the precept of Sunday observance is a pastoral outgrowth of the Church's longstanding awareness of Sunday's connection with the joy of Christ's resurrection. At the same time, as is hinted at in the closing paragraph of his introductory remarks, the pope is very aware of the human dimension of Sunday observance. In an often-dehumanizing society, Sunday rest in a spirit of joy, festivity and fellowship can provide a humanizing respite, an oasis of time in which to retrieve and restore human wholeness. If it is true that, as St. Ignatius said, “The glory of God is humanity fully alive,” then the Christian Sunday is meant to be an expression of this truth.

John Paul II appropriately links the observance of Sunday with Christian identity. Our intentional observance of Sunday helps us to keep our lives centred on the resurrection. It helps us get back to our roots. Simply put Sunday and its observance is part of who we are and makes us who we are. Although it is fitting to celebrate eucharist on almost any day, eucharist, Sunday and the Church were made for each other.

Questions for Discussion
1. Sunday and Weekend
On a “long weekend” (e.g., Victoria Day, Labour Day), how do you make Sunday different from Saturday and Monday?

Does your parish really need a Saturday evening mass? If so, can the group that regularly gathers there support the scheduling of these masses by providing an adequate roster of liturgical ministers (greeters, musicians, lectors, ministers of communion) so that participation is lively and worthy of all that Sunday means? Does your parish have more masses on Saturday than on Sunday? If so, why?

Does your parish ever celebrate the evening prayer of the Church? What steps would be needed to prepare the parish to do so?

2. Other Matters
How do you and those with whom you share your life occupy yourselves outside the Sunday liturgy? Is the day shot through with joy? Do Sunday activities bring you into a true mutual sharing of yourself with others? Are you refreshed at the end of Sunday?
Chapter I

Dies Domini

The Celebration of the Creator's Work

“Through him all things were made” (Jn 1:3)

8. For the Christian,
   Sunday is above all an Easter celebration,
   wholly illumined by the glory of the Risen Christ.
It is the festival of the “new creation”.
Yet, when understood in depth,
   this aspect is inseparable
   from what the first pages of Scripture tell us of the plan of God
   in the creation of the world.
It is true
   that the Word was made flesh in “the fullness of time” (Gal 4:4);
   but it is also true
   that, in virtue of the mystery of his identity as the eternal Son of the Father,
   he is the origin and end of the universe.
As John writes in the Prologue of his Gospel:
   “Through him all things were made,
   and without him was made nothing that was made” (1:3).
Paul too stresses this in writing to the Colossians:
   “In him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible ....
   All things were created through him and for him” (1:16).
This active presence of the Son in the creative work of God
   is revealed fully in the Paschal Mystery,
   in which Christ,
   rising as “the first fruits of those who had fallen asleep” (1 Cor 15:20),
   established the new creation
   and began the process which he himself will bring to completion
   when he returns in glory
   to “deliver the kingdom to God the Father ...,
   so that God may be everything to everyone”
   (1 Cor 15:24,28).

Already at the dawn of creation, therefore,
   the plan of God implied Christ’s “cosmic mission”.
This Christocentric perspective,
   embracing the whole arc of time,
   filled God's well-pleased gaze
   when, ceasing from all his work, he “blessed the seventh day and made it holy”
   (Gn 2:3).
According to the Priestly writer of the first biblical creation story,
   then was born the “Sabbath”,
   so characteristic of the first Covenant,
   and which in some ways foretells the sacred day of the new and final Covenant.
The theme of “God's rest” (cf. Gn 2:2)
   and the rest which he offered to the people of the Exodus
when they entered the Promised Land
(cf. Ex 33:14; Dt 3:20; 12:9; Jos 21:44; Ps 95:11)
is re-read in the New Testament
in the light of the definitive “Sabbath rest” (Heb 4:9)
into which Christ himself has entered by his Resurrection.

The People of God
are called to enter into this same rest
by persevering in Christ’s example of filial obedience (cf. Heb 4:3-16).
In order to grasp fully the meaning of Sunday, therefore,
we must re-read the great story of creation
and deepen our understanding of the theology of the “Sabbath”.

“In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth”
(Gn 1:1)

9. The poetic style of the Genesis story conveys well
the awe which people feel
before the immensity of creation
and the resulting sense of adoration
of the One who brought all things into being from nothing.
It is a story of intense religious significance,
a hymn to the Creator of the universe,
pointing to him as the only Lord
in the face of recurring temptations to divinize the world itself.
At the same time,
it is a hymn to the goodness of creation,
all fashioned by the mighty and merciful hand of God.

“God saw that it was good” (Gn 1:10,12, etc.).
Punctuating the story as it does,
this refrain sheds a positive light upon every element of the universe
and reveals the secret for a proper understanding of it
and for its eventual regeneration:
the world is good insofar as it remains tied to its origin
and, after being disfigured by sin, it is again made good
when, with the help of grace,
it returns to the One who made it.

It is clear
that this process directly concerns
not inanimate objects and animals
but human beings,
who have been endowed with the incomparable gift and risk of freedom.

Immediately after the creation stories,
the Bible highlights the dramatic contrast
between the grandeur of man,
created in the image and likeness of God,
and the fall of man,
which unleashes on the world the darkness of sin and death (cf. Gn 3).

10. Coming as it does from the hand of God,
the cosmos bears the imprint of his goodness.
It is a beautiful world,
rightly moving us to admiration and delight,
but also calling for cultivation and development.
Chapter I • Dies Domini: The Celebration of the Creator's Work

At the “completion” of God's work, the world is ready for human activity. “On the seventh day God finished his work which he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had done” (Gn 2:2).

With this anthropomorphic image of God's “work”, the Bible not only gives us a glimpse of the mysterious relationship between the Creator and the created world, but also casts light upon the task of human beings in relation to the cosmos.

The “work” of God is in some ways an example for man, called not only to inhabit the cosmos, but also to “build” it and thus become God's “co-worker”.

As I wrote in my Encyclical Laborem Exercens, the first chapters of Genesis constitute in a sense the first “gospel of work”. 10

This is a truth which the Second Vatican Council also stressed: “Created in God's image, man was commissioned to subdue the earth and all it contains, to rule the world in justice and holiness, and, recognizing God as the creator of all things, to refer himself and the totality of things to God so that with everything subject to God, the divine name would be glorified in all the earth”.11

The exhilarating advance of science, technology and culture in their various forms — an ever more rapid and today even overwhelming development — is the historical consequence of the mission by which God entrusts to man and woman the task and responsibility of filling the earth and subduing it by means of their work, in the observance of God's Law.

“Shabbat”: the Creator’s joyful rest

11. If the first page of the Book of Genesis presents God's “work” as an example for man, the same is true of God's “rest”:

“On the seventh day God finished his work which he had done” (Gn 2:2).

Here too we find an anthropomorphism charged with a wealth of meaning.

It would be banal to interpret God's “rest” as a kind of divine “inactivity”. By its nature, the creative act that founds the world is unceasing and God is always at work, as Jesus himself declares in speaking of the Sabbath precept: “My Father is working still, and I am working” (Jn 5:17).

The divine rest of the seventh day does not allude to an inactive God, but emphasizes the fullness of what has been accomplished.

11 Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World Gaudium et Spes, 34.
Chapter I • Dies Domini: The Celebration of the Creator's Work

It speaks, as it were, of God's lingering before the "very good" work (Gn 1:31) which his hand has wrought, in order to cast upon it a gaze full of joyous delight.

This is a "contemplative" gaze that does not look to new accomplishments but enjoys the beauty of what has already been achieved.

It is a gaze which God casts upon all things, but in a special way upon man, the crown of creation.

It is a gaze that already discloses something of the nuptial shape of the relationship which God wants to establish with the creature made in his own image, by calling that creature to enter a pact of love.

This is what God will gradually accomplish, in offering salvation to all humanity through the saving covenant made with Israel and fulfilled in Christ.

It will be the Word Incarnate, through the eschatological gift of the Holy Spirit and the configuration of the Church as his Body and Bride, who will extend to all humanity the offer of mercy and the call of the Father's love.

12. In the Creator's plan, there is both a distinction and a close link between the order of creation and the order of salvation.

This is emphasized in the Old Testament, when it links the "shabbat" commandment not only with God's mysterious "rest" after the days of creation (cf. Ex 20:8-11), but also with the salvation which he offers to Israel in the liberation from the slavery of Egypt (cf. Dt 5:12-15).

The God who rests on the seventh day, rejoicing in his creation, is the same God who reveals his glory in liberating his children from Pharaoh's oppression.

Adopting an image dear to the Prophets, one could say that in both cases God reveals himself as the bridegroom before the bride (cf. Hos 2:16-24; Jer 2:2; Is 54:4-8).

As certain elements of the same Jewish tradition suggest, to reach the heart of the "shabbat", of God's "rest", we need to recognize in both the Old and the New Testament the nuptial intensity that marks the relationship between God and his people.

12 For our Jewish brothers and sisters, a "nuptial" spirituality characterizes the Sabbath, as appears, for example, in texts of Genesis Rabbah such as X, 9 and XI, 8 (cf. J. Neusner, Genesis Rabbah, vol. I, Atlanta 1985, p. 107 and 117). The song Leka Dodi is also nuptial in tone: "Your God will delight in you, as the Bridegroom delights in the Bride... In the midst of the faithful of your beloved people, come O Bride, O Shabbat Queen" (cf. Preghiera serale del sabato, issued by A. Toaff, Rome, 1968-69, p. 3).
Hosea, for instance, puts it thus in this marvelous passage:

"I will make for you a covenant on that day
with the beasts of the field, the birds of the air,
and the creeping things of the ground;
and I will abolish the bow, the sword, and war from the land;
and I will make you lie down in safety.
And I will betroth you to me for ever;
I will betroth you to me in righteousness and in justice,
in steadfast love and in mercy.
I will betroth you to me in faithfulness;
and you shall know the Lord(2:18-20).

"God blessed the seventh day and made it holy" (Gn 2:3)

13. The Sabbath precept,
which in the first Covenant
prepares for the Sunday of the new and eternal Covenant,
is therefore rooted in the depths of God's plan.
This is why,
unlike many other precepts,
it is set not within the context of strictly cultic stipulations
but within the Decalog,
the "ten words" that represent the very pillars of the moral life
inscribed on the human heart.

In setting this commandment within the context of the basic structure of ethics,
Israel and then the Church declare that they consider it
not just a matter of community religious discipline
but a defining and indelible expression of our relationship with God,
announced and expounded by biblical revelation.

This is the perspective
within which Christians need to rediscover this precept today.
Although the precept may merge naturally with the human need for rest,
it is faith alone which gives access to its deeper meaning
and ensures that it will not become banal and trivialized.

14. In the first place, therefore,
Sunday is the day of rest
because it is the day "blessed" by God and "made holy" by him,
set apart from the other days
to be, among all of them, "the Lord's Day".

In order to grasp fully
what the first of the biblical creation accounts means by keeping the Sabbath "holy",
we need to consider the whole story,
which shows clearly how every reality,
without exception,
must be referred back to God.

Time and space belong to him.
He is not the God of one day alone,
but the God of all the days of humanity.

Therefore, if God "sanctifies" the seventh day with a special blessing
and makes it "his day" par excellence,
this must be understood
within the deep dynamic of the dialogue of the Covenant,
indeed the dialogue of "marriage".
This is the dialogue of love that knows no interruption,
yet is never monotonous.
In fact, it employs the different registers of love,
from the ordinary and indirect to those more intense,
which the words of Scripture and the witness of so many mystics
do not hesitate to describe
in imagery drawn from the experience of married love.

15. All human life,
and therefore all human time,
must become praise of the Creator and thanksgiving to him.
But man’s relationship with God also demands times of explicit prayer,
in which the relationship becomes an intense dialogue,
involving every dimension of the person.
“The Lord’s Day” is the day of this relationship par excellence
when men and women raise their song to God
and become the voice of all creation.

This is precisely why it is also the day of rest.
Speaking vividly as it does of “renewal” and “detachment”,
the interruption of the often oppressive rhythm of work
expresses the dependence of man and the cosmos upon God.
Everything belongs to God!
The Lord’s Day returns again and again
to declare this principle
within the weekly reckoning of time.
The “Sabbath” has therefore been interpreted evocatively
as a determining element
in the kind of “sacred architecture” of time that marks biblical revelation.¹³
It recalls
that the universe and history belong to God;
and without a constant awareness of that truth,
man cannot serve in the world as co-worker of the creator.

To "keep holy" by "remembering"
16. The commandment of the Decalogue
by which God decrees the Sabbath observance
is formulated in the Book of Exodus in a distinctive way:
"Remember the Sabbath day in order to keep it holy" (20:8).
And the inspired text goes on to give the reason for this,
recalling as it does the work of God:
"For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea,
and all that is in them,
and rested on the seventh day;
therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy (v.11).
Before decreeing that something be done,
the commandment urges that something be remembered.

It is a call to awaken remembrance of the grand and fundamental work of God that is creation, a remembrance that must inspire the entire religious life of man and then fill the day on which man is called to rest.

Rest therefore acquires a sacred value: the faithful are called to rest not only as God rested, but to rest in the Lord, bringing the entire creation to him, in praise and thanksgiving, intimate as a child and friendly as a spouse.

17. The connection between Sabbath rest and the theme of "remembering" God's wonders is found also in the Book of Deuteronomy (5:12-15), where the precept is grounded less in the work of creation than in the work of liberation accomplished by God in the Exodus: "You shall remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and the Lord your God brought you out from there with mighty hand and outstretched arm; therefore the Lord your God commanded you to keep the Sabbath day" (Dt 5:15).

This formulation complements the one we have already seen; and taken together, the two reveal the meaning of "the Lord's Day" within a single theological vision that fuses creation and salvation.

Therefore, the main point of the precept is not just any kind of interruption of work, but the celebration of the marvels which God has wrought. Insofar as this "remembrance" is alive, full of thanksgiving and of the praise of God, human rest on the Lord's Day takes on its full meaning. It is then that man enters the depths of God's "rest" and can experience a tremor of the Creator's joy when, after the creation, he saw that all he had made "was very good" (Gn 1:31).

From the Sabbath to Sunday
18. Because the Third Commandment depends upon the remembrance of God's saving works and because Christians saw the definitive time inaugurated by Christ as a new beginning, they made the first day after the Sabbath a festive day, for that was the day on which the Lord rose from the dead.

The Paschal Mystery of Christ is the full revelation of the mystery of the world's origin, the climax of the history of salvation and the anticipation of the eschatological fulfillment of the world. What God accomplished in Creation and wrought for his People in the Exodus has found its fullest expression in Christ's Death and Resurrection,
though its definitive fulfillment will not come until the Parousia, when Christ returns in glory.

In him, the “spiritual” meaning of the Sabbath is fully realized, as Saint Gregory the Great declares:
“For us, the true Sabbath is the person of our Redeemer, our Lord Jesus Christ.”

This is why the joy with which God, on humanity’s first Sabbath, contemplates all that was created from nothing, is now expressed in the joy with which Christ, on Easter Sunday, appeared to his disciples, bringing the gift of peace and the gift of the Spirit (cf. Jn 20:19-23).

It was in the Paschal Mystery that humanity, and with it the whole creation, “groaning in birth-pangs until now” (Rom 8:22), came to know its new “exodus” into the freedom of God’s children who can cry out with Christ, “Abba, Father!” (Rom 8:15; Gal 4:6).

In the light of this mystery, the meaning of the Old Testament precept concerning the Lord’s Day is recovered, perfected and fully revealed in the glory that shines on the face of the Risen Christ (cf. 2 Cor 4:6).

We move from the “Sabbath” to the “first day after the Sabbath”, from the seventh day to the first day: the dies Domini becomes the dies Christi! 

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The creation story (Genesis 1:1–2:4a) forms the great opening of the bible. It reflects upon the meaning of the universe in which we live and also upon what we are as human beings: our nature and our mission in this universe. It is, therefore, very appropriate that the Pope’s letter, *Dies Domini*, starts with a study of this biblical text, which provides the basis for the Jewish sabbath, but also for the Christian Sunday. The biblical text never even mentions the word “sabbath” because its message about sacred time is universal and valid for the whole of humanity whatever their religion may be. This creation story was written by a priest at a time during or after the exile, and addresses some of the needs of the people living in this chaotic situation. They had lost everything that was dear to them. Their faith in God was seriously challenged. And they were in danger of being absorbed into the new society in which they lived.

The writer did not know how creation happened historically or scientifically, but he could think. Since the only way to speak about God is to use human images, he reflected on how people build their own home. They start by preparing the grounds, then build the exterior. And when that is finished, they fix the interior and bring in the furniture. Finally, when everything is ready, the family can move into the new home. This is how people do it the world round; God, therefore, must have done it the same way! The writer presents a God who works for six days—just like we had the six-day work week (before the five-day work week) — but this work week is divided into two parts. In the first three days God puts things in order. On the first day he makes time—day and night (1:3–6). On the second day he makes two spaces—air and water (1:6–8). And on the third day he makes the third space—the earth and vegetation (1:9–13). In the second part of the work week God creates the ornaments that correspond perfectly to what has been produced in the first part of the week. On the fourth day he makes the sun, the moon and the stars to consolidate time created on the first day (1:14–19). On the fifth day God creates the fish and the birds that are the ornaments for the two spaces created on the second day (1:20–22). And finally on the sixth day come the ornaments for the space produced on the third day: God creates the land animals and, totally at the end when the whole “house” is ready, God brings in his own family, humanity (1:26–31).

Any attentive reader is impressed by the fact that creation is clearly done according to a plan. Everything in the universe has its own place, and the whole impresses by its harmony. For this writer, creation consists in putting...
order into chaos; and he certainly succeeded in showing this. That is what the people needed to hear. What God did at the moment of creation, he can do again. He can change the chaotic life of the people in exile into order. Each paragraph stresses this point even further. After God has produced something, he evaluates what he did: “God saw that it was good.” And at the end of everything “God saw all he had made, and indeed it was very good” (1:31).

**Seventh Day**

The following sentence – “Thus heaven and earth were completed with all their array” (2:1) – seems, therefore, a good conclusion of this creation narrative. But, to the surprise of the reader, the text goes on (2:2–3):

> “On the seventh day God completed the work he had been doing” (v.2a),
> a “on the seventh day he rested from all the work he had been doing” (v.2b)
> b “God blessed the seventh day” (v.3a)
> b' “he made it holy” (v.3b)
> a' “on it he rested from all the work he had done in creation” (v.3c)

The structure of this description of the seventh day is totally different from that of the preceding six days. Their structure is identical: “God said: Let there be... and so it was. God saw that it was good. Evening came... the first (second, etc.) day.” This remarkable difference makes the seventh day stand out as special, as apart. In each line of this text, as I have presented it, there is a reference to time: “the seventh day” (3 times) and “on it” (2 times). All the preceding paragraphs of the creation story simply end with a single reference to the day: “the first day” (1:5), “the second day” (1:8), etc. But in speaking of the seventh day, the text cannot stress this special day enough.

Time occupies an important place in the creation story. The first day, which is the beginning of the ordering of things (first part of the week); the fourth day, which is the beginning of the ornaments (second part of the week); and now this last day are all concerned with time. What all people have in common, wherever they live, is that they live in time. This is perhaps the only justice that exists in the world: time is equal for all. The first division of time is “day” and “night” – it is determined by light and darkness (1:5). And we need both: to work and to sleep. Time is also divided between “festivals (or seasons), days and years” and they are determined by the sun and the moon (1:14). Days are determined by the sun; months and often festivals by the moon; and years by the sun. People also need this variation in time between the regular days of the year and days of celebration. But who or what determines this seventh day?

The seven-day week does not easily fit into the month that is based upon the moon and into the year based upon the sun. For instance, “weeks” of ten days would be easier (3x10 = 30 days, and it would be decimal), or alternatively “weeks” of six or five days (6x5 = 30). But seven makes things complicated (7x4 = 28; this is the reason why some school boards have divided their timetable in a different way). Neither the sun nor the moon determines the system of a seven day week. The biblical text affirms that God decided this. God is the subject of all the verbs in the paragraph. That seventh day is God’s day. People have tried to get rid of this system – first the French revolution, then the Communist system – but they never succeeded. The week of seven days survived as the time frame in the western world. Although one wonders if the capitalist system is not now trying to undermine that seventh day.

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1 Biblical quotations throughout Professor Vogels’ commentary are taken from the Jerusalem Bible.
Commentary • The Restful Blessed Holy Seventh Day

God does several things on this seventh day. The first line says: “God completed the work he had been doing” (2:2a).

The text, using the same verb, has already said that “heaven and earth were completed with all their array” (2:1). And indeed after God had brought his own family into the universe he created, one could think that everything is over. It is not. God still wants to do one thing to make his work complete, or to “finish” his work (other possible translation). Instituting a seventh day to complete the ordering of chaos will really be the last thing he decides to do. The rest of the paragraph explains what he does on that day and consequently what he wants that day to be. By presenting God making this seventh day so special, the writer invites his people to do the same. By observing this special day, the people, even in exile, were capable of recognizing and identifying themselves as members of the people of God.

Restful Day

“On the seventh day he rested” (2:2b and repeated in 2:3c). This “rest,” repeated twice, contrasts with “the work he had been doing,” repeated three times. There is thus a strong opposition between work and rest. The Hebrew verb sbth (rest) is very similar to the Hebrew word sabbath, even if the etymological link between the two is disputed. Just as humans need the variety of day and night (1:5), of ordinary days and days of celebration (1:14), they also need a seventh day of rest after the six days of work. All this is part of a normal, orderly human existence. The “rest” of the creator in the biblical story does not mean “to do nothing.” It is not the equivalent of emptiness and boredom; rather, rest completes the work. The idea of “rest” is frequent in texts that speak of the promised land. God will bring people to a place of rest. God promises to Moses: “I myself will go with you, and I will give you rest” (Exodus 33:14). “And so, in my anger, I swore that not one would reach the place of rest I had for them” (Psalms 95:11). A place of rest is obviously not a place simply to sleep, but a place where one can live secure, in peace, far from the dangers of war. And just as there is a place for rest, God also wants for people a time for rest.

After God finishes his work, he now takes time to rest, which gives him the opportunity to contemplate and to admire everything he has made. He takes his distance from it. People can do the same thing; after they have worked hard they can take the time to reflect upon what they have accomplished. But there is something more. After creating humanity God said: “Subdue the earth, and be stewards over...” (1:28). God entrusts humanity, which he had made “in his image,” with the universe he created. He can rest. This too may inspire an understanding of the meaning of the seventh day. People often consider themselves to be important, even to the point that they believe that only they can do things in the right way. The seventh day may make us look at work differently: like God, we can trust others.

Blessed Day

God does not only rest on the seventh day, he also “blessed the seventh day” (2:3a). In the creation story God has already “blessed” before. After God created the animals, the text says: “God blessed them, saying, ‘Be fruitful, multiply...’” (1:22). And similar vocabulary is used after the creation of humanity: “God blessed them, saying to them, ‘Be fruitful, multiply...’” (1:28). For the continuation of plants there is no such statement. The text says only: “plants bearing seed... trees bearing fruit with their seed” (1:12). According to the thinking of that time, life consists in the blood. Plants, therefore, have no real life in them; their seed ensures that they continue to exist. But animals and humans have blood in them and thus real life. Their procreation requires a
special blessing from God because he is the only master of life. Blessing in the bible has always something to do with life. The seventh day must be a day that is life-giving, a day that stimulates, animates, enriches, refreshes, strengthens and gives fullness to life. People who observe this day will be blessed by God.

Holy Day

Finally, God "made it holy" (2:3b). In biblical tradition, to make holy or to consecrate is something done to places, persons and objects. It implies two aspects: a) to be set apart, b) for a particular service. If an object is made holy or consecrated, it is removed from its profane use to serve now in the cult. The same thing applies to a person or to a place. In the creation story the first thing that ever is declared holy is time. This is really exceptional: only in one other biblical text is a festival day called holy (Nehemiah 8:9,11). The seventh day is thus set apart from the six other days of the week. In contrast to these days characterized by work, this day is a day of rest, as is affirmed twice in the paragraph. But this setting apart is in view of a special service to God. This rest gives more time to consecrate to God. If God made this day holy, we should keep it holy. This is how the later legislation of the decalogue explains it, applying it to the sabbath: "Remember the sabbath day and keep it holy, as Yahweh your God has commanded you. For six days you shall labour and do all your work, but the seventh day is a sabbath for Yahweh your God. You shall do no work that day, neither you nor your son nor your daughter nor your servants, men or women, nor your ox nor your donkey nor any of your animals, nor the stranger who lives with you. Thus your servant, man or woman, shall rest as you do. Remember that you were a servant in the land of Egypt, and that Yahweh your God brought you out from there with mighty hand and outstretched arm; because of this, Yahweh your God has commanded you to keep the sabbath day" (Dt 5:12-15). Here, we are invited to "remember" God the saviour in our lives; and obviously, this then turns us to others. Just as God saves us, so we are called to save others. The seventh day is thus not only a day for the service of God but also for the service of others. This is clearly manifested in Jesus' attitude towards the seventh day. Jesus apparently loved to perform his miracles on that day. People were at times even upset about this: "There are six days when work is to be done" (Lk 13:14). And Jesus' answer is: "This woman, a daughter of Abraham whom Satan has held bound these eighteen years - was it not right to untie her bonds on the sabbath day?" (Lk 13:16).

The biblical law in Exodus and Deuteronomy speaks about the sabbath for Israel. The creation story does not mention the sabbath; it establishes a principle for humanity. Time is divided into ordinary time and holy time, the everyday and the solemn. Holy is thus introduced into creation, and that is a gift of God.

The seventh day is not a simple addition or an appendix to the six days of work. On the contrary, it "completes," it finishes, it is totally part of what we are and do. It is a day when we can try
Commentary • The Restful Blessed Holy Seventh Day

to set aside the worries, the burdens, the frustrations of our work, when, instead of looking for another accomplishment, for another client, or for the acquisition of another dollar, we can “rest” to stress spiritual values above material ones. That day must be a “blessing” in the sense that it is a life-giving day. Finally, it has to be a “holy” day – a day at the service of God and of others. This seventh day is one way of putting order in our often chaotic existence and of professing and identifying ourselves as members of the people of God.

Questions for Discussion

1. Restful Day
“The idea of ‘rest’ is frequent in texts that speak of the promised land.” Consider the Sundays of the last two or three months. How restful were they? Did they serve as a “promised land” at the end of the week’s journey? What is undermining our Sunday rest? Can this be eliminated? How can we make Sundays more restful for others?

2. Blessed Day
“Blessing in the bible has always something to do with life.” What is life-giving in our experience of Sunday? To what extent is Sunday a day of shared life?

3. Holy Day
 “[Sunday] has to be a “holy” day – a day at the service of God and of others.” Under which category does your participation in the Sunday celebration fall? Under which category do your other Sunday activities fall? 

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When Sunday Cannot Be a Day of Rest

In Exodus, God speaks to Moses of the meaning and importance of the sabbath. It is to be a day consecrated to the Lord - a day to be regarded as holy. After all, on the seventh day, even the Lord "rested and was refreshed" (Ex. 3:1).

But what of the many people for whom Sunday is anything but a day of rest? Quite different from the crowds of busy Sunday shoppers are all those who labour so that others might find rest. What of the clergy who are run off their feet meeting very full liturgical schedules; what of chaplains, hospice and hospital workers whose demanding work schedules may encompass any day of the week; what of those members of the laity and clergy alike for whom Sunday provides little or no opportunity to attend to their own spiritual needs because they are so busy serving the needs of others? For that matter, what of those who work a six-day week and have only one day to tackle all the household chores? The needs and demands of caring for children or a loved one do not let up simply because it is Sunday!

Although these are people who might manage to attend the Sunday celebration of eucharist, they are likely unable to enjoy a day’s rest in the full sense of which God made clear to Moses. In the words of Pope John Paul II, “For Christians, it is not normal that Sunday, the day of joyful celebration, should not also be a day of rest, and it is difficult for them to, keep Sunday holy if they do not have enough free time” (Dies Domini, #64). How is it then that such members of Christ’s body are to maintain and experience a spirit of sabbath? How are they to keep the day holy?

It seems to me and to those far wiser that we need both to increase our awareness of and to celebrate the way God’s spirit breathes in the daily experiences of our lives. The question of how to keep then sabbath holy causes us to ask, “How does each day become a holy day?”

The monastic movement rested on the presumption that, in order to flourish, deep prayer requires silence and separation from the concerns of ordinary living. However, the gospel imperative, so clearly upheld by the Second Vatican Council, that we go forth to share the “hopes and joys, the sufferings and sorrows of the people of this earth, especially those who are poor or in any way suffer,” affirms a different spirituality.

It must be possible to build habits of contemplative praying and awareness that can flourish in the ordinary surroundings of our day, including situations of tension and conflict. Jesuit William Callahan of the Quixote Centre coined the phrase “noisy contemplation” and I believe it is apt.

Callahan reminds us that Jesus approached life in a contemplative way. Jesus seems to have used his physical senses, compassion

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1 Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World Gaudium et Spes, 1.
and empathy to contemplate life and the people whom he met.

He contemplated people with a love which revealed their hearts to him. He shared his own heart in return.

It would appear that this contemplative approach to life was the dynamic that nourished Jesus and was the basic way he prayed throughout his days. Sometimes he prayed apart to gain perspective and to rest. But, throughout most of his ministry, loving and praying took place as he shared his life with the people. Thus, just as stillness offers a path to God, so too does the noise of our daily lives. Prayer and contemplative awareness is possible for every person, no matter what their environment and psychological state.

Jesus encouraged us to be simple and to persevere in prayer. To begin, we must want to pray. Jesus pledged that God would hear our prayers and respond. The actions we repeat every day present an excellent opportunity to build habits of contemplation. Beginning the morning with prayer can remind us to open our hearts and senses to contemplate life during the day ahead. A loving glance at a family member, at a friend, or at our rumpled selves in the mirror, can set in motion our habit of welcoming people during the day. Some days will find our hearts open. Other days may be full of dryness and hardness of heart. But reminding ourselves to open, even during such days, can sometimes change the direction of the day and encourage us to love.

St. Ignatius of Loyola, the founder of the Jesuits, encouraged his brothers to look into their hearts twice a day to review briefly the unfolding of the day, to remind themselves of their call to follow Jesus, and to encourage themselves to be loving in the hours ahead. Like the time of silence after the communion, such moments of brief reflection can remind us to give thanks for all the blessings of life that have come to us and can foster hope for life ahead.

We may not always feel or be very passionate. However, it is in struggling to act with compassion and to do the just thing, despite our lack of energy or enthusiasm, that we are transformed. In other words, doing the service brings about our gradual transformation.

And so the question becomes, can we who minister see the people who make demands on our time and patience as the way God is calling us to the mystery of transformation? Those who are in need of our love and care are the very ones who, in unexpected ways, reveal God's presence to us. As we are poured out for others, we become eucharist for them and they for us.

What we need, then, is to realize the intimate connection between celebrating the eucharist and living a eucharistic life. The disciples travelling on the road to Emmaus after the crucifixion did not know they travelled with the risen Christ until they recognized him suddenly in the breaking of the bread. Yet it was the same living Lord who had been with them all along. And it is this same compassionate Lord who is with each of us in every moment of every day, and not only in the breaking of the Bread.

Whether one is challenged to find rest on the sabbath or to resist the tendency to allow the sabbath rest to degenerate into emptiness and boredom, we do well to remember:

Jesus often used the word “abide.” To abide in Jesus is what prayer is all about. We must live this word and open up the chalice of our being to the presence of God and enter into His silence. We must learn to rest in that peace which comes when God touches our hearts.2

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Chapter II
Dies Christi
The Day of the Risen Lord and of the Gift of the Holy Spirit

The weekly Easter
19. "We celebrate Sunday
because of the venerable Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ,
and we do so
not only at Easter
but also at each turning of the week": so wrote Pope Innocent I at the beginning of the fifth century,\(^{15}\)
testifying to an already well established practice
that had evolved from the early years after the Lord's Resurrection.
Saint Basil speaks of "holy Sunday,
honored by the Lord's Resurrection,
the first fruits of all the other days";\(^ {16}\)
and Saint Augustine calls Sunday "a sacrament of Easter".\(^ {17}\)

The intimate bond between Sunday and the Resurrection of the Lord is strongly emphasized by all the Churches of East and West.
In the tradition of the Eastern Churches in particular,
every Sunday is the anastasimos hemera, the day of Resurrection,\(^ {18}\)
and this is why it stands at the heart of all worship.

In the light of this constant and universal tradition,
it is clear
that, although the Lord's Day is rooted in the very work of creation
and even more in the mystery of the biblical "rest" of God,
it is nonetheless to the Resurrection of Christ that we must look
in order to understand fully the Lord's Day.
This is what the Christian Sunday does,
leading the faithful each week
to ponder and live the event of Easter,
true source of the world's salvation.

20. According to the common witness of the Gospels,
the Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead
took place on "the first day after the Sabbath" (Mk 16:2,9; Lk 24:1; Jn 20:1).
On the same day,
the Risen Lord appeared to the two disciples of Emmaus (cf. Lk 24:13-35)
and to the eleven Apostles gathered together (cf. Lk 24:36; Jn 20:19).

\(^ {15}\) Ep. ad Decentium XXV, 4, 7: PL 20, 555.
\(^ {16}\) Homiliae in Hexaemeron II, 8: SC 26, 184.
\(^ {17}\) Cf. In Io. Ev. Tractatus XX, 20, 2: CCL 36, 203; Epist. 55, 2: CSEL 34, 170-171.
\(^ {18}\) The reference to the Resurrection is especially clear in Russian, which calls Sunday simply "Resurrection" (Voskresenie).
Chapter II • Dies Christi: The Day of the Risen Lord and of the Gift of the Holy Spirit

A week later — as the Gospel of John recounts (cf. 20:26) — the disciples were gathered together once again, when Jesus appeared to them and made himself known to Thomas by showing him the signs of his Passion.

The day of Pentecost — the first day of the eighth week after the Jewish Passover (cf. Acts 2:1), when the promise made by Jesus to the Apostles after the Resurrection was fulfilled by the outpouring of the Holy Spirit (cf. Lk 24:49; Acts 1:4-5) — also fell on a Sunday.

This was the day of the first proclamation and the first baptisms: Peter announced to the assembled crowd that Christ was risen and “those who received his word were baptized” (Acts 2:41).

This was the epiphany of the Church, revealed as the people into which are gathered in unity, beyond all their differences, the scattered children of God.

The first day of the week

21. It was for this reason that, from Apostolic times, “the first day after the Sabbath”, the first day of the week, began to shape the rhythm of life for Christ’s disciples (cf. 1 Cor 16:2).

“The first day after the Sabbath” was also the day upon which the faithful of Troas were gathered “for the breaking of bread”, when Paul bade them farewell and miraculously restored the young Eutychus to life (cf. Acts 20:7-12).

The Book of Revelation gives evidence of the practice of calling the first day of the week “the Lord’s Day” (1:10).

This would now be a characteristic distinguishing Christians from the world around them.

As early as the beginning of the second century, it was noted by Pliny the Younger, governor of Bithynia, in his report on the Christian practice “of gathering together on a set day before sunrise and singing among themselves a hymn to Christ as to a god”.

And when Christians spoke of the “Lord’s Day”, they did so giving to this term the full sense of the Easter proclamation: “Jesus Christ is Lord” (Phil 2:11; cf. Acts 2:36; 1 Cor 12:3).

Thus Christ was given the same title that the Septuagint used to translate what in the revelation of the Old Testament was the unutterable name of God: YHWH.

22. In those early Christian times, the weekly rhythm of days was generally not part of life.

19 Epist. 10, 96, 7.
in the regions where the Gospel spread, and the festive days of the Greek and Roman calendars did not coincide with the Christian Sunday. For Christians, therefore, it was very difficult to observe the Lord's Day on a set day each week. This explains why the faithful had to gather before sunrise.20 Yet fidelity to the weekly rhythm became the norm, since it was based upon the New Testament and was tied to Old Testament revelation. This is eagerly underscored by the Apologists and the Fathers of the Church in their writings and preaching where, in speaking of the Paschal Mystery, they use the same Scriptural texts which, according to the witness of Saint Luke (cf. 24:27, 44-47), the Risen Christ himself would have explained to the disciples. In the light of these texts, the celebration of the day of the Resurrection acquired a doctrinal and symbolic value capable of expressing the entire Christian mystery in all its newness.

Growing distinction from the Sabbath

23. It was this newness that the catechesis of the first centuries stressed as it sought to show the prominence of Sunday relative to the Jewish Sabbath. It was on the Sabbath that the Jewish people had to gather in the synagogue and to rest in the way prescribed by the Law. The Apostles, and in particular Saint Paul, continued initially to attend the synagogue so that there they might proclaim Jesus Christ, commenting upon "the words of the prophets that are read every Sabbath" (Acts 13:27). Some communities observed the Sabbath while also celebrating Sunday. Soon, however, the two days began to be distinguished ever more clearly, in reaction chiefly to the insistence of those Christians whose origins in Judaism made them inclined to maintain the obligation of the old Law. Saint Ignatius of Antioch writes: "If those who were living in the former state of things have come to a new hope, no longer observing the Sabbath but keeping the Lord's Day, the day on which our life has appeared through him and his death ..., that mystery from which we have received our faith and in which we persevere in order to be judged disciples of Christ, our only Master, how could we then live without him,

20 Cf. ibid. In reference to Pliny's letter, Tertullian also recalls the coetus ante lucani in Apologeticum 2, 6: CCL 1, 88; De Corona 3, 3: CCL 2, 1043.
given that the prophets too,
as his disciples in the Spirit,
awaited him as master?".21

Saint Augustine notes in turn:
"Therefore the Lord too has placed his seal on his day,
which is the third after the Passion.
In the weekly cycle, however,
it is the eighth day after the seventh,
that is after the Sabbath,
and the first day of the week".22

The distinction of Sunday from the Jewish Sabbath
grew ever stronger in the mind of the Church,
even though there have been times in history
when, because the obligation of Sunday rest was so emphasized,
the Lord's Day tended to become more like the Sabbath.

Moreover,
there have always been groups within Christianity
that observe both the Sabbath and Sunday as "two brother days".23

The day of the new creation

    with the Old Testament vision of the Sabbath
    prompted theological insights of great interest.
In particular,
    there emerged the unique connection between the Resurrection and Creation.
Christian thought spontaneously linked the Resurrection,
    which took place on "the first day of the week",
    with the first day of that cosmic week (cf. Gn 1:1 – 2:4)
    which shapes the creation story in the Book of Genesis:
    the day of the creation of light (cf. 1:3-5).

This link invited an understanding of the Resurrection
    as the beginning of a new creation,
    the first fruits of which is the glorious Christ,
    "the first born of all creation" (Col 1:15)
    and "the first born from the dead" (Col 1:18).

25. In effect,
    Sunday is the day above all other days
    that summons Christians to remember
    the salvation that was given to them in baptism
    and which has made them new in Christ.
    "You were buried with him in baptism,
    in which you were also raised with him

21 To the Magnesians 9, 1-2: SC 10, 88-89.
22 Sermon 8 in the Octave of Easter 4: PL 46, 841. This sense of Sunday as "the first day" is clear in the Latin liturgical calendar, where Monday is called feria secunda, Tuesday feria tercia and so on. In Portuguese, the days are named in the same way.
23 Saint Gregory of Nyssa, De Castigatione: PG 46, 309. The Maronite Liturgy also stresses the link between the Sabbath and Sunday, beginning with the "mystery of Holy Saturday" (cf. M. Hayek, Maronite [Église], Dictionnaire de spiritualité, X [1980], 632-644).]
through faith in the working of God,
who raised him from the dead" (Col 2:12; cf. Rom 6:4-6).
The liturgy underscores this baptismal dimension of Sunday,
both in calling for the celebration of baptisms —
as well as at the Easter Vigil —
on the day of the week
"when the Church commemorates the Lord’s Resurrection"; 24
and in suggesting
as an appropriate penitential rite at the start of Mass
the sprinkling of holy water,
which recalls the moment of Baptism in which all Christian life is born. 25

The eighth day: image of eternity
26. By contrast,
the Sabbath’s position as the seventh day of the week
suggests for the Lord’s Day a complementary symbolism,
much loved by the Fathers.
Sunday is not only the first day,
it is also “the eighth day”,
set within the sevenfold succession of days
in a unique and transcendent position
that evokes not only the beginning of time
but also its end in “the age to come”.
Saint Basil explains
that Sunday symbolizes that truly singular day
which will follow the present time,
the day without end
which will know neither evening nor morning,
the imperishable age
which will never grow old;
Sunday is the ceaseless foretelling of life without end
which renews the hope of Christians
and encourages them on their way. 26

Looking towards the last day,
which fulfills completely the eschatological symbolism of the Sabbath,
Saint Augustine concludes the Confessions describing the Eschaton
as “the peace of quietness, the peace of the Sabbath,
a peace with no evening”. 27

In celebrating Sunday,
both the “first” and the “eighth” day,
the Christian is led towards the goal of eternal life. 28

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23 Saint Gregory of Nyssa, De Castigatione: PG 46, 309. The Maronite Liturgy also stresses the link between the Sabbath and Sunday, beginning with the “mystery of Holy Saturday” (cf. M. Hayek, Maronite [Eglise], Dictionnaire de spiritualité, X [1980], 632-644.)
24 Rite of Baptism of Children, No. 9; cf. Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults, No. 59.
25 Cf. Roman Missal, “Rite of Blessing and Sprinkling of Holy Water”.
28 Cf. Saint Augustine, Epist. 55, 17: CSEL 34, 188: “Ita ergo erit octavus, qui primus, ut prima vita sed aeter­na reddatur.”
The day of Christ-Light

27. This Christocentric vision sheds light upon another symbolism which Christian reflection and pastoral practice ascribed to the Lord's Day. Wise pastoral intuition suggested to the Church the Christianization of the notion of Sunday as "the day of the sun", which was the Roman name for the day and which is retained in some modern languages. 29 This was in order to draw the faithful away from the seduction of cults that worshipped the sun, and to direct the celebration of the day to Christ, humanity's true "sun". Writing to the pagans, Saint Justin uses the language of the time to note that Christians gather together "on the day named after the sun", but for believers the expression had already assumed a new meaning that was unmistakably rooted in the Gospel. 30 Christ is the light of the world (cf. Jn 9:5; also 1:4-5, 9), and, in the weekly reckoning of time, the day commemorating his Resurrection is the enduring reflection of the epiphany of his glory. The theme of Sunday as the day illuminated by the triumph of the Risen Christ is also found in the Liturgy of the Hours 32 and is given special emphasis in the Pannichida, the vigil which in the Eastern liturgies prepares for Sunday. From generation to generation as she gathers on this day, the Church makes her own the wonderment of Zechariah as he looked upon Christ, seeing in him the dawn which gives "light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death" (Lk 1:78-79), and she echoes the joy of Simeon when he takes in his arms the divine Child who has come as the "light to enlighten the Gentiles" (Lk 2:32).

The day of the gift of the Spirit

28. Sunday, the day of light, could also be called the day of "fire", in reference to the Holy Spirit. The light of Christ is intimately linked to the "fire" of the Spirit, and the two images together reveal the meaning of the Christian Sunday. 33

29. Thus in English "Sunday" and in German "Sonntag".
32. See, for example, the Hymn of the Office of Readings: "Dies aetasque ceceris octava splendet sanctior in te quam, Iesu, consecras primitiae surgenfium" (Week I); and also: "Salve dies, dienum gloria, dies felix Christi victoria, dies digna iugi luxetia dies prima. Lux divina caesis irradiat, in qua Christus infernum spoliat, mortem vincit et reconciliat summis ima" (Week II). Similar expressions are found in hymns included in the Liturgy of the Hours in various modern languages.

34. National Bulletin on Liturgy
When he appeared to the Apostles on the evening of Easter,
Jesus breathed upon them and said:
"Receive the Holy Spirit.
If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven;
if you retain the sins of any, they are retained" (Jn 20:22-23).
The outpouring of the Spirit was the great gift of the Risen Lord
to his disciples on Easter Sunday.
It was again Sunday when,
fifty days after the Resurrection,
the Spirit descended in power, as "a mighty wind" and "fire"
(Acts 2:2-3),
upon the Apostles gathered with Mary.
Pentecost is not only the founding event of the Church,
but is also the mystery which for ever gives life to the Church.34
Such an event has its own powerful liturgical moment
in the annual celebration that concludes "the great Sunday",35
but it also remains a part of the deep meaning of every Sunday,
because of its intimate bond with the Paschal Mystery.
The "weekly Easter" thus becomes, in a sense, the "weekly Pentecost",
when Christians relive the Apostles' joyful encounter with the Risen Lord
and receive the life-giving breath of his Spirit.

The day of faith
29. Given these different dimensions that set it apart,
Sunday appears as the supreme day of faith.
It is the day when,
by the power of the Holy Spirit,
who is the Church's living "memory" (cf. Jn 14:26),
the first appearance of the Risen Lord
becomes an event
renewed in the "today" of each of Christ's disciples.
Gathered in his presence in the Sunday assembly,
believers sense themselves called like the Apostle Thomas:
"Put your finger here, and see my hands.
Put out your hand, and place it in my side.
Doubt no longer, but believe"
(Jn 20:27).
Yes, Sunday is the day of faith.
This is stressed by the fact that the Sunday Eucharistic liturgy,
like the liturgy of other solemnities,
includes the Profession of Faith.
Recited or sung,
the Creed declares the baptismal and Paschal character of Sunday,
making it the day on which
in a special way
the baptized renew their adherence to Christ and his Gospel
in a rekindled awareness of their baptismal promises.

Chapter II • Dies Christi: The Day of the Risen Lord and of the Gift of the Holy Spirit

Listening to the word and receiving the Body of the Lord, the baptized contemplate the Risen Jesus present in the “holy signs” and confess with the Apostle Thomas: “My Lord and my God!” (Jn 20:28).

An indispensable day!

30. It is clear then why, even in our own difficult times, the identity of this day must be protected and above all must be lived in all its depth. An Eastern writer of the beginning of the third century recounts that as early as then the faithful in every region were keeping Sunday holy on a regular basis. What began as a spontaneous practice later became a juridically sanctioned norm. The Lord's Day has structured the history of the Church through two thousand years: how could we think that it will not continue to shape her future? The pressures of today can make it harder to fulfill the Sunday obligation; and, with a mother’s sensitivity, the Church looks to the circumstances of each of her children. In particular, she feels herself called to a new catechetical and pastoral commitment, in order to ensure that, in the normal course of life, none of her children are deprived of the rich outpouring of grace that the celebration of the Lord’s Day brings. It was in this spirit that the Second Vatican Council, making a pronouncement on the possibility of reforming the Church calendar to match different civil calendars, declared that the Church “is prepared to accept only those arrangements that preserve a week of seven days with a Sunday”. Given its many meanings and aspects, and its link to the very foundations of the faith, the celebration of the Christian Sunday remains, on the threshold of the Third Millennium, an indispensable element of our Christian identity.

37 Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy Sacrosanctum Concilium, Appendix: Declaration on the Reform of the Calendar.
In his opening remarks, Pope John Paul notes that Christians observe Sunday “not only to mark the succession of time but to reveal time’s deeper meaning.” Sunday stands out as a unique day for Christians, for it is the day of the Lord’s resurrection and the day on which the Holy Spirit came upon the disciples at Pentecost. With the dawn of the Christian era, a change occurred with regard to which day was designated as the day of worship. John Paul notes this transition and helps us to understand its reason and significance in Chapter II of Dies Domini. This transition is tied both to the unique revelation of God in Jesus Christ, the light of the world, and to the central place that Christ occupies as the centre of history, the source of salvation and the fulfillment of creation.

The important process of remembering the past and celebrating it in the present shapes our vision and hope for the future. It allows us to recall that our time is, in reality, God’s time. Remembering helps us to interpret our times and its events, and gives them meaning. Just as we could never repeat a past event, so too we realize that we do not repeat the events of the life of Christ; rather, we build on them as we recall them and allow them to be (re)lived in the present. Thus we have the ability to embrace the events of our life and see in them the death and resurrection of Jesus.

As the observance of sabbath was tied to remembering and celebrating God’s mighty deeds in creation, revelation and redemption, so the transition from the seventh day to the first day of week is wedded to remembering and celebrating the death and resurrection of Jesus.

The Weekly Easter
In this section Pope John Paul opens up for us the content of the paschal mystery. It includes the incarnation, life, death and resurrection of Jesus, the coming of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost, and the ongoing life of the Church. Very often we limit the paschal mystery to the death and resurrection of Jesus, but the paschal mystery is lived in the Church today and each day. Jesus continues to live and die and rise in his body, the Church.

The celebration of this paschal mystery is not only a yearly feast at Easter, but it is also the weekly feast of Sunday. The spirit and meaning of the sabbath (the seventh day), as the day of remembering and celebrating, is transferred to Sunday (the first day). Yet there has been a shift of emphasis from creation to redemption in the transition from sabbath to Sunday. The universal witness of all the Churches of the East and West in observing Sunday as the day of the resurrection is not just a transfer of the content of the sabbath to Sunday; it is a development that highlights the unique place of the incarnation of Jesus in the history of

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our salvation and his resurrection from the dead.

The liturgical year operates on two cycles of time – the weekly cycle of seven days and the yearly cycle – which are superimposed on one another and operate at the same time. The cycles are structurally parallel to each other. The weekly cycle revolves around Sunday, and the yearly cycle centres around Easter Sunday. John Paul implies that since these two cycles revolve around the paschal mystery, the same intensity and content of remembering and celebrating the yearly feast of Easter should be present and reflected in the weekly celebration of Sunday. (See also Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, #102.)

The Holy Spirit continues to be outpoured on each successive generation. For this reason Pope John Paul refers to the first preaching of Peter and the apostles that led to the first baptisms which also took place on the first day of the week. Baptism is the celebration of and the entrance into the death/resurrection of Jesus and the descent of the Holy Spirit. So, along with the eucharist, baptism expresses the content and meaning of the paschal mystery and its life in the Church. Thus the celebration of the paschal mystery has four focal points: Sunday, Easter, baptism and eucharist. In a special way, the celebration of the eucharist is tied to the weekly Sunday just as baptism is linked to the yearly Easter.

The First Day of the Week
Since Sunday is the day of worship and rest for all Christians, we tend to view it as the culmination of the week. In Jewish culture the sabbath (Saturday) was the day of worship and therefore the culmination of the week. Many calendars now list Monday as the first day of the week, but in order to understand Dies Domini and the place of Sunday, we must view time from the biblical perspective. Of the seven days of creation in the book of Genesis, God began the work of creation on what is our Sunday, and rested on the sabbath, which is our Saturday. This makes Sunday the first day of the week and Saturday the seventh. But, for the first Christians, Sunday was not a holiday; it was a workday, and so Christians had to gather before sunrise to worship God and then continue on their daily routine.

Christians, from the beginning, have recognized the importance of the first day of the week, and adopted Sunday as the day of their worship. Pope John Paul lists some of the scriptural events that occurred on the first day of the week, thus giving us the motive for the importance of Sunday in the life of the early Church. These scriptural references recount stories of the resurrection and the appearances of Jesus and highlight the fact that these occurred on the first day of the week. The fact that the New Testament writers note when these events occur is significant, for the gospels rarely detail when events occur. (Note also John's deliberate references to the relationship between the Jewish Passover and the events of the Triduum.) These passages form the backbone of the lectionary for the Easter season, as the following list demonstrates.

**Easter Vigil**
Matthew 28.1-10 (Year A)
Mark 16.1-8 (Year B)
Luke 24.1-12 (Year C)

**Easter Sunday**
Acts 10. 34a, 36-43

**Second Sunday of Easter**
Acts 2. 42-47 (Year A)
John 20.19-31 (Years A-B-C)

**Third Sunday of Easter**
Acts 2.14, 22b-28 (Year A)
Luke 24.13-35 (Year A)
to the emperor Trajan that included details concerning a group of Christians. The emperor had outlawed private gatherings in the evening and the governor was obviously reporting on groups within the territory. This letter dates around 111-113 AD.

3 Saint Ignatius of Antioch, who wrote the Letter to the Magnesians in 110 AD. Ignatius was the bishop of Antioch, a disciple of Polycarp, who was a disciple of the apostle John. In chapter 9 of his letter, Ignatius records the fact that Christians keep Sunday instead of the sabbath. On this day they celebrate the resurrection, which distinguishes them from other groups. Ignatius may be reinforcing the practice as well as reporting it.

4 Justin, a Christian convert, writer and martyr. Around 150 AD he wrote his First Apology (an exposition or explanation of the Christian faith). In it he hoped to give Roman authorities some understanding of Christians. His writing describes the celebration of the eucharist as the gathering of the community on the day of the sun. He links Sunday with the first day of creation and draws parallels between the creation of light and the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. Christians gather on this day, he explains, because it is the day of the resurrection and the day Jesus appeared to the disciples and taught them.

**Growing Distinction from the Sabbath**

Dies Domini notes that at first Christians observed both the sabbath and the first day of the week. However, with the passing of time, Christians attempted to exert some distinction between Christianity and Judaism. The Acts of the Apostles and the Letter to the Galatians witness the initial conflict between Christianity and Judaism, especially with regard to the observance of Old Testament law. The separation
between Judaism and Christianity was not without its problems. (For example, the emphatic tone of Ignatius and other writers indicates that the Church was consolidating its practice of observing only the Lord's Day.) This separation not only affected the celebration of the weekly Easter (Sunday), it also affected the yearly celebration of the Christian Passover: that is, Easter. Should Easter be celebrated on the calendar date which, as with the present dating of Christmas, could fall on any day of the week? Or should it be celebrated on the closest Sunday, the Lord's Day, the day of resurrection? Many Jewish Christians who had resettled in other parts of the world tended to celebrate it on the calendar date, while Christians from other cultures tended to celebrate it on the Sunday. Eventually, the yearly celebration of the resurrection at Easter was tied to Sunday. Today, Easter is celebrated on different dates, though always on Sunday.

The Day of the New Creation
If at first Christians tried to separate themselves from their Jewish heritage, this necessity was forgotten with the passage of time. A new trend developed: that of making links between Christian practices and the Hebrew scriptures. This is seen in the connection of Sunday to the work of creation. Since Sunday stood as the first day of the week, the early Christians were quick to draw parallels between the Genesis account of the work of the first day and the work of the resurrection. On the first day of creation, God created the light that separated light from darkness, day from night. On the first day of the new creation, the resurrection of Jesus is a new work, for the Christ, the light of the world, has conquered the night of sin and death.

This development did more than to simply restate creation theology; it gave rise to new developments and ways of thinking about and applying the resurrection to the life of the Church. The connection between baptism/eucharist and the paschal mystery was further reinforced. This is seen even today in the Church's custom of baptizing almost exclusively at the Easter Vigil and on Sunday, but also in the custom of the blessing and sprinkling of holy water, which is one of the options in the introductory rites of the eucharist.

The Eighth Day: Image of Eternity
In order to understand Dies Domini, we need to do some math and have an understanding of the importance of numbers in Judaism and early Christian literature. In biblical numerology, the number seven denotes fullness and perfection. One less than seven (six) denotes imperfection and falling short of the mark (the biblical notion of sin). Seven plus one (eight) propels us beyond fulfillment to infinity and eternity. In this way of counting, the first day of the new creation may also be counted as the eighth day. Many baptismal fonts are eight-sided because of the links between baptism, the new creation and the number eight. This symbolism has been used by many Christian writers to emphasize the uniqueness of the resurrection, but also to project the significance of the resurrection into the future. The eighth day is the last day, but it is also an unending day. It is the day of eternal light. Jesus is the risen Sun that will never set.

The Day of Christ-Light
The name for the first day of the week in various languages shows the influence of Christianity. In English we see the custom and tendency of the Church to transform Roman and pagan names and feasts into Christocentric names and feasts. This is true of Christmas as well as the name "Sunday." Rather than
a reference to the pagan sun-god, Sunday is now understood in terms of Christ the Son (Sun). In Latin and French the name for the first day of the week springs from the dies Domini. This reference to the “day of the Lord” has scriptural roots in Joel and is reflected in Revelation, chapter 10.

The resurrection of Jesus and the life of the Spirit is also commemorated and celebrated at assigned hours of the day in the liturgy of the hours, which draws on this imagery of Christ, the risen Sun. (Some older Catholics may remember the celebration of vespers or evening prayer.) This liturgical daily prayer of the Church (and Christians) continues as groups (and, where necessary, individuals) gather close to sunrise and sundown to offer the Church’s prayer of praise and intercession.

The Day of the Gift of the Spirit
The first day of the week is not only the day of the resurrection, it is also the day of Pentecost, the day of the gift of the Holy Spirit. In the creation account, the Spirit hovered or blew over the waters of creation. In John’s gospel, Jesus breathed out the Spirit on the disciples from the cross as he breathed out his last, and more directly in his resurrection appearances. The baptism of Jesus in the waters of the Jordan, accompanied by the overshadowing of the Holy Spirit, gives added significance to the “baptism of fire” that Jesus says he must receive in his passion and death; the interconnection of the paschal mystery with baptism and the eucharist is thus reinforced. Moreover, in ancient times, since light came from the sun and from fire, a connection was rapidly made between the day of light (of the resurrection) and the day of fire (of Pentecost).

The significance of numbers should not be lost here. Pentecost means the fiftieth day. The number fifty comes from $7 \times 7 + 1$. The prophet Joel spoke of the last day (think eighth or fiftieth day) when God would pour out his Spirit over the earth. The day of the resurrection and the day of the Spirit are indeed one. Sunday is also the celebration of a weekly Pentecost.

The Day of Faith
How do we keep alive the memory of Jesus? Is that enough? How does the paschal mystery live and grow in us? The answer is by the power of the Holy Spirit. This includes our individual lives and our life together as the body of Christ. Sunday is a day of gathering, a day of celebrating the eucharist. On this day the whole Church gathers before its Lord and God. The act of gathering is an indispensable element of the life of faith.

Creation and the incarnation of Jesus remind us that God’s loving and saving activity is mediated through the material world. Faith can only survive and grow within the context of a people, a society. Gathering, proclaiming the scriptures, celebrating eucharist and baptism, all recall God’s mighty deeds in Christ and unleash the power of the Spirit to transform our “todays.” The power of the Spirit at work in our symbols and rituals reinforces our common faith in the resurrection and makes present the death and resurrection of Jesus among us. The celebration of the eucharist, like the profession of faith, is the renewal of our baptismal commitment. Celebrating the Sunday eucharist allows us to remember in order to be renewed, in order to live.

An Indispensable Day!
As both the weekly cycle and the yearly cycle centre around the Lord’s resurrection, so the life of the Christian is centred on the worship of God on the day the Lord Jesus rose from the dead. But Sunday worship is not just commemorative, although it is that; centred on the resurrection it is also the
mark of the Christian's life. The observance of Sunday ties the Church more closely to Christ by gathering his ecclesial body on the day that he rose from the dead. Our whole existence is a constant living of the death and resurrection of Jesus lived in us.

As Pope John Paul states, the identity of Sunday must be protected and lived. While many Christians realize the importance of the eucharist in the life of the Church, they do not always make the connection between the eucharist and Sunday. Just as the eucharist is vital to the life of the Church, so its meaning and vitality is tied to the day of Christ's resurrection, the day on which we celebrate. This is crucial in our time when Sunday is gradually becoming just another day in the civil calendar. Christians need not succumb to this tendency. As noted previously, Sunday was a workday for the first three-and-a-half centuries of the Church, yet Christians never lost their sense of Sunday. While it may be harder to fulfill the spirit of Sunday, it is not impossible. Many faiths (e.g., Eastern Christianity, as well as Judaism and Islam) and cultures (e.g., Chinese emigrants) maintain a separate religious or civic calendar in addition to the Gregorian calendar.

Questions for Discussion

1. General
Sunday is a day of worship and rest, but not a day of inactivity. How does this change your perception of Sunday? How has this apostolic letter changed your perception of the week and the place of Sunday in the liturgical calendar?

Do the themes of creation, revelation, and salvation enter into the perception of your faith and the celebration of your parish? How do these themes focus the Church's prayer?

In what ways do Christians remember the saving deeds of God? What is the connection between the word and sacrament? Do the scriptures help us to remember and give thanks?

2. Families
In what ways could you or your family observe the Day of the Lord?

3. Parishes
In what ways could the schedule of your parish help those who must work on Sunday? How does your parish reach out to those who cannot gather with you for the Sunday eucharist? Who are these people? How does the local Church community handle celebrations of the eucharist in institutions, such as hospitals, nursing homes, senior citizen complexes, schools or penitentiaries? How do we need to change our pastoral activities in this regard?

How could our parishes strengthen the bond between the four points of the paschal mystery (Sunday, eucharist, Easter and baptism)? How could the link between baptism and eucharist be strengthened? How does the Church forge and protect the connection of Sunday with the eucharist? And Easter with baptism? Is this evident in your parish?

4. Ministers
How can Sunday be a day of rest and celebration for bishops, priests, deacons and parish workers?
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Volume 31 • Number 156 • 43
The presence of the Risen Lord

31. "I am with you always, to the end of the age" (Mt 28:20).
This promise of Christ never ceases to resound in the Church
as the fertile secret of her life
and the wellspring of her hope.
As the day of Resurrection,
Sunday is not only the remembrance of a past event:
it is a celebration of the living presence of the Risen Lord
in the midst of his own people.

For this presence to be properly proclaimed and lived,
it is not enough that the disciples of Christ pray individually
and commemorate the death and Resurrection of Christ inwardly,
in the secrecy of their hearts.
Those who have received the grace of baptism are not saved as individuals alone,
but as members of the Mystical Body,
having become part of the People of God. 38
It is important therefore that they come together
to express fully the very identity of the Church, the ekklesia,
the assembly called together by the Risen Lord
who offered his life "to reunite the scattered children of God" (Jn 11:52).
They have become "one" in Christ (cf. Gal 3:28) through the gift of the Spirit.
This unity becomes visible when Christians gather together:
it is then that they come to know vividly
and to testify to the world
that they are the people redeemed,
drawn "from every tribe and language and people and nation" (Rev 5:9).

The assembly of Christ’s disciples
embodies from age to age
the image of the first Christian community
which Luke gives as an example in the Acts of the Apostles,
when he recounts that the first baptized believers
"devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and fellowship,
to the breaking of bread and the prayers" (2:42).

The Eucharistic assembly

32. The Eucharist is
not only a particularly intense expression of the reality of the Church’s life,
but also in a sense its “fountain-head”. 39
Chapter III • Dies Ecclesia: The Eucharistic Assembly: Heart of Sunday

The Eucharist feeds and forms the Church:

"Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread" (1 Cor 10:17).

Because of this vital link with the sacrament of the Body and Blood of the Lord, the mystery of the Church is savored, proclaimed, and lived supremely in the Eucharist.  

This ecclesial dimension intrinsic to the Eucharist is realized in every Eucharistic celebration. But it is expressed most especially on the day when the whole community comes together to commemorate the Lord's Resurrection. Significantly, the Catechism of the Catholic Church teaches that "the Sunday celebration of the Lord's Day and his Eucharist is at the heart of the Church's life".  

33. At Sunday Mass, Christians relive with particular intensity the experience of the Apostles on the evening of Easter when the Risen Lord appeared to them as they were gathered together (cf. Jn 20:19).

In a sense, the People of God of all times were present in that small nucleus of disciples, the first fruits of the Church.

Through their testimony, every generation of believers hears the greeting of Christ, rich with the messianic gift of peace, won by his blood and offered with his Spirit: "Peace be with you!"

Christ's return among them "a week later" (Jn 20:26) can be seen as a radical prefiguring of the Christian community's practice of coming together every seven days, on "the Lord's Day" or Sunday, in order to profess faith in his Resurrection and to receive the blessing that he had promised: "Blessed are those who have not seen and yet believe" (Jn 20:29).

This close connection between the appearance of the Risen Lord and the Eucharist is suggested in the Gospel of Luke in the story of the two disciples of Emmaus, whom Christ approached and led to understand the Scriptures and then sat with them at table.

They recognized him when he "took the bread, said the blessing, broke it and gave it to them" (24:30). The gestures of Jesus in this account are his gestures at the Last Supper, with the clear allusion to the "breaking of bread", as the Eucharist was called by the first generation of Christians.


41 No. 2177.
The Sunday Eucharist

34. It is true
that, in itself,
the Sunday Eucharist is no different from the Eucharist celebrated on other days,
nor can it be separated from liturgical and sacramental life as a whole.

By its very nature,
the Eucharist is an epiphany of the Church; 42
and this is most powerfully expressed
when the diocesan community gathers in prayer with its Pastor:
“The Church appears with special clarity
when the holy People of God, all of them,
are actively and fully sharing in the same liturgical celebrations”
especially when it is the same Eucharist
“sharing one prayer at one altar, 43
at which the Bishop is presiding,
surrounded by his presbyters and his ministers”.

This relationship with the Bishop and with the entire Church community
is inherent in every Eucharistic celebration,
even when the Bishop does not preside,
regardless of the day of the week on which it is celebrated.

The mention of the Bishop in the Eucharistic Prayer is the indication of this.

But because of its special solemnity
and the obligatory presence of the community,
and because it is celebrated “on the day when Christ conquered death
and gave us a share in his immortal life”, 44
the Sunday Eucharist expresses with greater emphasis its inherent ecclesial dimension.

It becomes the paradigm for other Eucharistic celebrations.
Each community,
gathering all its members for the “breaking of the bread”,
becomes the place where the mystery of the Church is concretely made present.

In celebrating the Eucharist,
the community opens itself to communion with the universal Church, 46
imploring the Father
to “remember the Church throughout the world”
and make her grow
in the unity of all the faithful with the Pope
and with the Pastors of the particular Churches,
until love is brought to perfection.

44 These are the words of the Embolism, formulated in this or similar ways in some of the Eucharistic Prayers of the different languages. They stress powerfully the “Paschal” character of Sunday.
Chapter III • Dies Ecclesia: The Eucharistic Assembly: Heart of Sunday

The day of the Church

35. Therefore, the dies Domini is also the dies Ecclesiae.
This is why
on the pastoral level
the community aspect of the Sunday celebration should be particularly stressed.
As I have noted elsewhere,
among the many activities of a parish,
“none is as vital or as community-forming
as the Sunday celebration of the Lord’s Day and his Eucharist”.
Mindful of this,
the Second Vatican Council recalled
that efforts must be made
to ensure that there is “within the parish, a lively sense of community,
in the first place through the community celebration of Sunday Mass”.
Subsequent liturgical directives made the same point,
asking that on Sundays and holy days
the Eucharistic celebrations held normally in other churches and chapels
be coordinated with the celebration in the parish church,
in order “to foster the sense of the Church community,
which is nourished and expressed in a particular way
by the community celebration on Sunday,
whether around the Bishop, especially in the Cathedral,
or in the parish assembly, in which the pastor represents the Bishop”.

36. The Sunday assembly is the privileged place of unity:
it is the setting for the celebration of the sacramentum unitatis
that profoundly marks the Church as a people
gathered “by” and “in”
the unity of the Father, of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.
For Christian families,
the Sunday assembly is one of the most outstanding expressions of their identity
and their “ministry” as “domestic churches”,
when parents share with their children
at the one Table of the word and of the Bread of Life.
We do well to recall in this regard
that it is first of all the parents
who must teach their children to participate in Sunday Mass;
they are assisted in this by catechists,
who are to see to it
that initiation into the Mass
is made a part of the formation imparted
to the children entrusted to their care,

47 Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy Sacrosanctum Concilium, 42.
48 Sacred Congregation of Rites, Instruction on the Worship of the Eucharistic Mystery Eucharisticum Mysterium (25 May 1967), 26; AAS 59 (1967), 555.

48 • National Bulletin on Liturgy
Chapter III • Dies Ecclesia: The Eucharistic Assembly: Heart of Sunday

explaining the important reasons
behind the obligatory nature of the precept.
When circumstances suggest it,
the celebration of Masses for Children,
in keeping with the provisions of the liturgical norms, 51
can also help in this regard.

At Sunday Masses in parishes,
insofar as parishes are "Eucharistic communities", 52
it is normal to find different groups, movements, associations
and even the smaller religious communities present
in the parish.
This allows everyone to experience in common what they share most deeply,
beyond the particular spiritual paths
which, by discernment of Church authority, 53 legitimately distinguish them.
This is why on Sunday, the day of gathering,
small group Masses are not to be encouraged:
it is not only a question of ensuring
that parish assemblies are not without the necessary ministry of priests,
but also of ensuring
that the life and unity of the Church community
are fully safeguarded and promoted. 53
Authorization of possible and clearly restricted exceptions to this general guideline
will depend upon the wise discernment of the Pastors of the particular Churches,
in view of special needs in the area of formation and pastoral care,
and keeping in mind the good of individuals or groups —
especially the benefits
which such exceptions may bring to the entire Christian community.

A pilgrim people

37. As the Church journeys through time,
the reference to Christ's Resurrection
and the weekly recurrence of this solemn memorial
help to remind us
of the pilgrim and eschatological character of the People of God.

Sunday after Sunday
the Church moves towards the final "Lord's Day",
that Sunday that knows no end.
The expectation of Christ's coming
is inscribed in the very mystery of the Church 55
and is evidenced in every Eucharistic celebration.
But, with its specific remembrance of the glory of the Risen Christ,
the Lord's Day recalls with greater intensity the future glory of his "return".

Chapter III • Dies Ecclesia: The Eucharistic Assembly: Heart of Sunday

This makes Sunday
the day on which the Church,
showing forth more clearly her identity as “Bride”,
anticipates in some sense the eschatological reality of the heavenly Jerusalem.
Gathering her children into the Eucharistic assembly
and teaching them to wait for the “divine Bridegroom”,
she engages in a kind of “exercise of desire”,
receiving a foretaste of the joy of the new heavens and new earth,
when the holy city, the new Jerusalem, will come down from God,
“prepared as a bride adorned for her husband” (Rev 21:2).

The day of hope
38. Viewed in this way,
Sunday is not only the day of faith,
but is also the day of Christian hope.
To share in “the Lord's Supper”
is to anticipate the eschatological feast of the “marriage of the Lamb” (Rev 19:9).
Celebrating this memorial of Christ, risen and ascended into heaven,
the Christian community waits
“in joyful hope for the coming of our Savior, Jesus Christ”. 57
Renewed and nourished by this intense weekly rhythm,
Christian hope becomes the leaven and the light of human hope.
This is why
the Prayer of the Faithful
responds not only to the needs of the particular Christian community
but also to those of all humanity;
and the Church,
coming together for the Eucharistic celebration,
shows to the world
that she makes her own
“the joys and hopes, the sorrows and anxieties of people today,
especially of the poor and all those who suffer”. 58

With the offering of the Sunday Eucharist,
the Church crowns the witness
which her children strive to offer every day of the week
by proclaiming the Gospel
and practicing charity
in the world of work
and in all the many tasks of life;
thus she shows forth more plainly
her identity “as a sacrament, or sign and instrument
of intimate union with God
and of the unity of the entire human race”. 59

57 Roman Missal, Embolism after the Lord’s Prayer.
58 Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World Gaudium et Spes, 1.
E ven a cursory reading of Dies Domini leaves us fascinated by the Pope's unswerving focus on the resurrection of the Lord. The resurrection is "the fundamental event upon which Christian faith rests" (2) and the "true source of the world's salvation" (19). And Sunday is above all else "the day of the resurrection," making it the Lord's Day and the "fundamental feast day" of the Church (2). In the words of Saint Augustine, Sunday is "a sacrament of Easter" (19). In Chapter III, Pope John Paul turns his attention to the remarkable event that marks the weekly day of the resurrection: the gathering of peoples and nations with the risen Lord. His comments on the significance of this assembly are of immense importance to all Christians.

Paragraph numbers 31 to 38 of Chapter III are the subject of the present article.

Gathered with the Risen Lord

The Pope begins by drawing our attention to the presence of the risen Lord: "As the day of Resurrection, Sunday is not only the remembrance of a past event: it is a celebration of the living presence of the Risen Lord in the midst of his own people" (31). Thus, in the Sunday eucharistic assembly, "Christians relive with particular intensity the experience of the Apostles on the evening of Easter when the risen Lord appeared to them as they were gathered together" (33).

Unpacking the Text

The Pope's teaching on the presence of the risen Lord shapes our whole approach to Sunday and the eucharistic assembly. We see more clearly that we come together on Sunday with one grand purpose in mind: to be with the Lord. He is really present in our midst, and his presence permeates and colours the celebration from beginning to end. The General Instruction of the Roman Missal underlines this very point when it says, "Christ is really present to the assembly gathered in his name; he is present in the person of the minister, in his own word, and indeed substantially and permanently under the eucharistic elements" (no. 7). And we see more clearly what an awesome privilege it is to belong to the assembly, to recognize the Lord, to speak with him, to share his life!

Put simply, the Sunday liturgy makes the day of the resurrection come alive in our midst. We meet the Lord as truly as the Apostles met him on the evening of Easter and as the disciples met him on the road to Emmaus. When we allow this dimension of our faith to touch our hearts, we realize what an extraordinary event is taking place in our lives. And we see how foolish it would be to begrudge this precious time with the Lord. And when people ask us, "Why do you go to church on Sunday?" we now have a very clear answer at hand: "We go to church to meet with Jesus the Lord." This is the exciting truth of our faith. Our only task is to discern the real presence of the Lord: to recognize him in our brothers and sisters and the one who presides, in the word he speaks, in the prayers we pray, and, in an absolutely unique way, in the food and drink of the eucharistic feast.

Gathered with the Nations

Keeping his focus on the presence of the risen Lord, Pope John Paul explores the dynamics of the Sunday eucharistic assembly. It is the Lord himself who calls us together, and his goal is to reunite the people of the world, making them one in him: [This is] "the assembly called together by the Risen Lord who offered his life to reunite the scattered children..."
of God.” They have been “drawn ‘from every tribe and language and people and nation,’” and “they become ‘one’ in Christ through the gift of the Spirit” (31).

Unpacking the Text

Dies Domini puts the Sunday eucharistic assembly at the very centre of God’s plan for the salvation of the world. In concrete terms, this plan of salvation is a work of restoration; it is the work of reaching out to a world that is broken, divided and estranged from God, and bringing it back together in Christ. The Sunday eucharist is the decisive event where all of this happens. The Sunday eucharistic assembly is precisely the “coming back together” of the peoples and nations of the world under the call of the risen Lord. Thus, the Sunday eucharistic assembly looms large in the history of salvation. It is the staging ground for the restoration of all things in Christ. And its ultimate goal is to embrace the whole of the world, so that God may be all in all.

Once we see the purpose and scope of the Sunday eucharistic assembly, our eyes are opened to what is already taking place through the power of the Holy Spirit. Already, in villages, towns and cities throughout the world, hundreds of millions, even a billion people, are coming together on the day of the resurrection, gathered by the risen Lord. Jesus once said to his disciples, “And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself” (John 12.32); it is this gathering, this assembly, that is taking shape in our midst, before our very eyes, even now.

Dies Domini shows us how important it is for us to be present in the Sunday eucharistic assembly. This is where the action is. This is where the “scattered children of God” are being brought together. This is where the risen Lord is making the world one in him. This is where we find salvation. And this is certainly where we want to be.

Gathered as Church

We have seen that the Sunday eucharistic assembly is at the centre of God’s plan for the salvation of the world. But what is the relationship between this assembly and the Church? Pope John Paul makes it quite clear: the assembly is the Church. It expresses fully “the very identity of the Church, the ekklesia, the assembly called together by the Risen Lord” (31). “The Eucharist feeds and forms the Church: ‘Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread.’ Because of this vital link with the sacrament of the Body and Blood of the Lord, the mystery of the Church is savoured, proclaimed, and lived supremely in the Eucharist” (32).

Thus, “By its very nature, the Eucharist is an epiphany of the Church ... Each community, gathering all its members for the ‘breaking of the bread,’ becomes the place where the mystery of the Church is concretely made present” (34).

Unpacking the Text

Sometimes the simplest questions are the most difficult to answer: for example, “What is the Church?” Dies Domini points out that the very word ekklesia (or ecclesia, in Latin) means assembly. The Church is an assembly: the assembly convoked by the risen Lord to gather the world as one people in him. Thus, the Sunday Eucharist is not simply something that the Church “does.” Rather, it is the event that makes us be Church, the event that constructs, fashion, forms and brings into being the great assembly in the risen Lord.

Pope John Paul goes on to stress the principle of unity: “The Sunday assembly is the privileged place of unity: it is the setting for the celebration of the sacramentum unitatis [sacrament of unity] which profoundly marks the Church as a people gathered ‘by’ and
‘in’ the unity of the Father, of the Son and of the Holy Spirit” (36). His observations flow naturally from the goal of the Sunday eucharist, which is to gather the world into unity in Christ: “This unity becomes visible when Christians gather together: it is then that they come to know vividly and to testify to the world that they are the people redeemed, drawn ‘from every tribe and language and people and nation’” (31).

It is here, in the Sunday assembly, that hatred, division and prejudice are overcome, that people of every kind – the young and the old, the rich and the poor, and people of every colour and race and language – stand side by side as brothers and sisters in the Lord. In this assembly, the hospitality of Christ is the norm. It is within this truly extraordinary assembly that we discover the Church. And this is where we belong. As Pope John Paul points out, “Those who have received the grace of baptism are not saved as individuals alone, but as members of the Mystical Body, having become part of the People of God” (31).

**Gathered for the Feast**

In the Sunday eucharist, the assembly of the scattered children of God savour the presence of the risen Lord. Moreover, gathered at the Lord’s table, they share his very life. Perceived in faith, this is an extraordinary experience of the fullest hope and joy. Pope John Paul leads us in this direction when he reminds us that “Sunday [is] the day on which the Church, showing forth more clearly her identity as ‘Bride,’ anticipates in some sense the eschatological reality of the heavenly Jerusalem” (37). In the eucharistic assembly, we receive “a foretaste of the joy of the new heavens and new earth” (37). And “to share in ‘the Lord’s Supper’ is to anticipate the eschatological feast of the ‘marriage of the Lamb’” (38).

**Unpacking the Text**

If the divine plan of salvation is to reunite a broken and divided world, it is no ordinary unity that God has in mind. It is sharing the life of the risen and exalted Lord. It is communion of life, in Christ, with the living God. This is perhaps the most astounding revelation of the Christian faith. The scriptures exploit the nuptial imagery of the Bride (the Church) and the Bridegroom (the Lord) and the marriage feast of the Lamb to express the intimacy of this union.

The Pope invites us to see that the Sunday eucharist, which is the Lord’s Supper, is nothing less than this marriage feast of the Lamb. It is the risen Lord who calls us together. He gathers us at his table – the Lord’s table – and it is he who presides. And he shares with us his own body and blood, his own risen and glorious life in God. Already, under sacramental signs, we begin to share the feast that awaits us at the end of time (the meaning of “eschatological”): the everlasting feast of the kingdom of God.

It is in the experience of this Sunday feast that we recognize ourselves as a pilgrim people. Our destiny is communion of life in God forever. And we look forward in joyful hope to the fulfillment of all things in Christ the Lord.

**Questions for Discussion**

1. **Gathered with the Lord**

How do most Catholics understand the presence of the Lord at the Sunday eucharist? Does Dies Domini change this understanding? If so, how? How does the Pope’s teaching on the real presence of the risen Lord change your approach to the Sunday celebration?

2. **Gathered with the Nations**

Before you read Dies Domini, did you know that it is the Lord himself who calls us to gather with him? What difference does this make in your spiritual
life? Do most Catholics go to church to fulfil an individual obligation or to become part of the Lord's assembly? What difference does this make?

3. Gathered as Church
Before you read Dies Domini, how would you have described "the Church"? Does the understanding of the Church as the Lord's assembly affect your attitude toward the Church and the Sunday celebration? How might the Pope's insistence on the unity of the assembly affect the way we prepare and celebrate the Sunday eucharist today?

4. Gathered for the Feast
Do most Catholics understand that the Sunday eucharist is the Lord's Supper and the marriage feast of the Lamb? If not, how do most Catholics understand holy communion? Can the Sunday eucharist be planned and celebrated in such a way that it reveals more clearly its identity as the Lord's Supper and the feast of shared life in God? [T]

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Q1. Which diocese in Canada is the largest when measured in hectares?

Q2. Which diocese in Canada extends farthest south?

Q3. Which diocese in Canada extends farthest north?

Q4. How many Latin rite dioceses are there in Canada?

Q5. How many archdioceses are there in Canada?

Q6. How many Ukrainian eparchies are there in Canada?

Q7. Which diocese has the most religious sisters?

Q8. Which dioceses have the most auxiliary bishops?

Q9. Which dioceses border on Hudson's Bay?

Q10. Which dioceses border on the Pacific Ocean?

Q11. Which diocese has the smallest Catholic population?

Q12. Which diocese has the largest Catholic population?

Answers on page 63
From the National Office

Donna Kelly

On these pages in this and future issues of the Bulletin, readers will find reports and documents from the National Liturgy Office. In this issue, I would like to report on three projects: the revision of the Sacramentary, a supplement to the Order of Christian Funerals dealing with cremation, and cassettes of music from the Catholic Book of Worship III.

The Canadian Revision of the Sacramentary

Some of you have been serving as consultants to your bishops as they prepared to vote on the various volumes of the Sacramentary. To date, they have voted and approved a revision of the Sacramentary for Sunday and Solemnities and the Sacramentary for Weekdays. For those of you wondering how soon before you will see a new book, it is necessary to explain the process in a little more detail.

Liturgical texts require a confirmatio (official approval) from the Congregation for Divine Worship and Discipline of the Sacraments in Rome. This final stage takes months and often years to complete. Until this confirmatio is received we may not prepare the texts for publication. Texts are prepared by Rome in Latin and are sent to the International Commission on English in the Liturgy (ICEL) for translation into English. The ICEL translations are then forwarded to all the English-speaking countries in the world.

Here in Canada, the Episcopal Commission for Liturgy established a committee to receive the ICEL texts for the Sacramentary, to make adaptations for the Church in Canada and to prepare the books both for the vote of the bishops and for presentation to the whole Church in Canada. This committee has been functioning since 1992 and has engaged in a considerable amount of work, which includes adapting the ritual and the ICEL texts for the Church in Canada, composing a number of original prayers for use in Canada, writing pastoral notes to accompany the Sacramentary, and designing the layout for presentation of texts.

Once the committee finishes this work, the books are then sent to the bishops for a vote. For approval, 2/3 of the Canadian bishops must vote placet (in favour); the Sunday Sacramentary received 90% placet votes from the English sector bishops. Once the bishops have completed their voting, the Episcopal Commission for Liturgy examines the comments which have been sent in along with the votes and decides if there are further changes which need to be made. The book is then prepared for presentation to the Congregation for Divine Worship and Discipline of the Sacraments. During the week of December 7, 1998 the Sunday Sacramentary underwent its final scrutiny in the National Liturgy Office and was received from the printers. An accompanying letter was written by Cardinal Jean-Claude Turcotte,

Donna Kelly, cnd, has been the director of the National Liturgy Office since 1995.
president of the CCCB. The Canadian revision of the Sunday Sacramentary is now in Rome.

As mentioned earlier in this article, the bishops have also completed their voting on the Weekday Sacramentary (96% of the bishops voted placet). The Episcopal Commission for Liturgy has reviewed comments from the bishops. The Weekday Sacramentary will now be prepared for presentation to Rome. It is the goal of the National Liturgy Office to have the book on its way to Rome by the time you read these words. The committee is still involved in the work of adapting the Sacramentary for Rituals and Masses of Various Needs and Occasions. They meet again in January and if they are able to conclude their work at that meeting, the texts might be ready for the bishops to vote in the coming weeks. Once confirmation is received from Rome, we will move as quickly as possible to get the books into your hands.

Order of Christian Funerals Supplement for Cremation

The Order of Christian Funerals Supplement for Cremation was voted on and approved by the Canadian bishops in 1998 and was sent to Rome in the spring. As soon as the confirmation is obtained we will move forward to publication. The process described above for the Sacramentary was also followed for the cremation supplement, with the addition of a step which is used for some ritual books. Before the ritual was sent to the bishops for vote, it was sent to a number of priests in various dioceses across the country who piloted the ritual and offered suggestions for its improvement. This process of wider consultation is helpful in providing a ritual which is user-friendly and meets the needs of priests and laity. But it also delays the project, sometimes by a year or more. Such consultation was conducted for Sunday Celebration of the Word and Hours and for the Catholic Book of Worship III.

Catholic Book of Worship III Cassettes

Another project of note is the taping of music contained in the Catholic Book of Worship III. To date, nine tapes have been completed and released; recording has been completed on two more tapes which will be released in 1999. The purpose of these tapes is to provide choirs with an additional strategy for becoming familiar with the treasury of music which is available in the Catholic Book of Worship III, especially where few choir members read music well. The music is recorded using a variety of accompanying instruments organ, piano and guitar. This gives choirs an opportunity to hear that the music in the national hymn book can be accompanied by any instrument. When the project is completed, probably by early 2000, the tapes will be available as a set. In the meantime, they may be purchased individually, with discount rates available immediately after release or, order through your diocesan office. The tapes which have been completed to date are: Volume I (tapes 1 & 2) Advent and Christmas Music; Volume 2 (tapes 3 & 4) Lent and Easter Music; Volume 3 (tape 5) Service Music; Volume 4 (tapes 6 & 7) Music for Sacraments and Rites; Volume 5 (tapes 8 & 9) Music for the Liturgy of the Hours. Still to come is the music for Ordinary Time. Acclamations and psalms, as well as hymns, are presented on the tapes so choirs can learn to use the book in all its richness.

Production of each volume of the series (two tapes) requires about twenty-four hours of practice and recording time. Michel Guimont is choir director for this project and Michel Renaud does the recording and mixing.
to the costs incurred in the recording process itself, additional copyright fees must be paid for recording the music and producing the tapes. Composers are paid a certain percentage of the fee received by the copyright holders and this enables them to continue their ministry of composing the music and words which enhance our liturgical celebrations. To purchase copies of the music or tapes is the only just way to

From the National Office

 insure that composers receive remuneration for their work. To receive information or to purchase these tapes, contact Publications Service, 90 Parent Avenue, Ottawa, ON K1N 7B1.

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The Canadian bishops have organized into regional conferences for the purpose of working on local issues. They are the Atlantic Episcopal Assembly (AEA), the Assemblée des évêques du Québec (AEQ), the Ontario Conference of Catholic Bishops (OCCB), and the Western Catholic Conference (WCC). Three of the regional conferences of bishops have mandated the establishment of a liturgical advisory body to assist the conferences of bishops and diocesan staffs in the promotion and implementation of the whole gamut of the ongoing liturgical renewal. These advisory bodies are the Atlantic Liturgy Conference, the Ontario Liturgical Conference and the Western Conference for Liturgy. Members of each liturgical conference include directors of diocesan liturgy offices, chairs of diocesan liturgical commissions, and others with expertise in the field of liturgy. Each of the conferences meets annually to address needs within the region. In addition to holding these annual meetings, the liturgical conferences also undertake various projects and activities which arise out of their discussions. These projects and activities include the establishment of various summer programs in liturgy, the creation of materials for pastoral use, research to provide background information for the conferences of bishops regarding various issues in the field of liturgy, and the coordination of the efforts of member dioceses. Naturally, because the rites of initiation are essentially liturgical events whose celebrations are guided by an official liturgical book, the liturgical conferences also have a share in responsibility for the implementation of the *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults* within their regions. In addition, the Atlantic Liturgy Conference sponsors a biannual major gathering, the Atlantic Liturgical Congress.

Every three years members of the regional conferences come together to coordinate their efforts nationwide and share information on the progress of their respective projects and activities. It was one such meeting that gave birth to the Mississauga Statement which appeared in Bulletin #154 (Fall 1998). Related work continues within the regional conferences.

Beginning with the next issue, the Bulletin will feature a more detailed report on the work of one of the regional liturgical conferences, including an annual update from the Office national de liturgie on liturgical work within the French sector.

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Morning
Core Course
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Rev. Stephen Malkiewicz, ofm
Elective Courses
CLS 405 Liturgy with First Nations Peoples
Rev. James Ravenscroft
CLS 507 Liturgical Ministry with the Sick and Dying – Rev. Peter Sharpe

Evening
Core Course
CLS 301 Introduction to Liturgy
Rev. Stephen Malkiewicz, ofm
Elective Courses
CLS 404 The Word of God in the Lectionary (Year B) – Rev. Paul Fachet, omi
CLS 509 The Catechism of the Catholic Church – Rev. Jean Papen

Session II: July 19—30, 1999
Morning
Core Courses
CLS 304 The Liturgical Year and the Lectionary
Kim Wanner
CLS 305 Liturgical Prayer
Rev. Leo Hofmann
Elective Course
CLS 402 Liturgical Music and Singing
Dr. Glenn Byer

Evening
Core Course
CLS 302 The Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults – Most Rev. Gerald Wiesner, omi
Elective Courses
CLS 406 Divine Liturgy in the Byzantine Rite
Most Rev. Lawrence Huculak, osbm
CLS 504 Liturgies with Lay Presiders
Dr. Glen Byer
CLS 511 Liturgical Ministry: Discernment and Pastoral Practice – Richard Wanner

NOTE: This is the last year in which both CLS 304 and CLS 305 will be offered in the same year. After 1999, one of these courses will be offered each year.

For further information contact:
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Nathan Mitchell begins his discussion of the topic suggested in the title by touching on some issues in the Church in America, such as that of Catholic identity. He then explores the section on the eucharist in the Catechism of the Catholic Church, making some comparisons with the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy and the General Instruction of the Roman Missal. He goes on to show how contemporary biblical scholarship opens up an understanding of the connections between Jesus and the eucharist. His last section deals specifically with the issue of real presence, including the concept of transubstantiation. The book concludes with a list of resources on Sunday celebrations in the expectation of the eucharist and on the eucharistic prayer.

Mitchell, associate director for research at the Notre Dame Center for Pastoral Liturgy, brings his scholarship to an issue which has been debated in the Church for many centuries. Preachers and catechists especially will find these insights helpful.

The Changing Face of the Church, edited by Timothy Fitzgerald and Martin F. Connell (Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications, 1998); 244 pp., $16 U.S.

The title of this book was the theme of the June 1997 pastoral liturgy conference at the Notre Dame Center for Pastoral Liturgy, the 25th such conference to be held there. Included in the book are 16 of the papers given at the conference, papers which addressed the theme from many vantage points. The topics included Christian initiation in a small parish, marriage preparation, healing the past, equality in the Bible, cultural diversity, cremation, Sunday worship in the absence of the eucharist, and more.

The first paper in the book is the response of Bishop Donald Trautman upon receiving the Michael Mathis Award. This conference also marked the 50th anniversary of the establishment of the liturgical studies program at the University of Notre Dame by the Holy Cross priest, Michael Mathis, who, for the first time, brought together scholars for a summer institute.

Authors included in the book are Austin Flemming, Richard Rutherford, Thomas Simons, James and Evelyn Whitehead, and Nathan Mitchell, among others.


This book consists of the seven major presentations of a symposium in April 1995 on reconciliation and “ReMembering Church.” Sponsored by the North American Forum on the Catechumenate, the interdisciplinary meeting brought together a variety of participants to engage the human sciences and Christian tradition in critical reflection on the pastoral issues surrounding reconciliation.

Included in this book are the presentations by keynote speaker and social ethicist Toinette Eugene, who asks if

Zita Maier, an Ursuline sister, is associate editor of the Prairie Messenger. She holds a degree in liturgy from St. John's University, Collegeville, Minnesota.
reconciliation has a future in a world so deeply divided by persuasive forms of social and individual sin, as well as sociologist James Davidson, who draws a profile of alienation in the Catholic Church today. Paul Philibert, OP, explores the issue “through the lens of pastoral psychology,” and anthropologist Fredric Roberts raises questions about knowledge of assumptions and biases on the part of those involved in the ministry of reconciliation. New Testament professor Margaret Mitchell explores reconciliation in Paul’s First Letter to the Corinthians, and theologian and historian James Dallen traces the tradition of penance throughout history to reveal of formats used. The final paper by Kathleen Hughes, in which she revisits the introduction to the Rite of Penance, presents theological perspectives on the current ritual.

The book is meant to stimulate further discussion on reconciliation. To help along this discussion, each presentation is followed by a brief section entitled “For Pastoral Reflection and Response.”


The texts of talks given at two events at the Notre Dame Center for Pastoral Liturgy are the contents of this book. Part I includes the major presentations from a symposium in December 1995 celebrating the 25th anniversary of the Center. Among the talks are the presentation “Liturgy Thirty Years after the Council: High Point or Recession?” by Godfried Cardinal Danneels, primate of Belgium; a response entitled “The Vocation of a Liturgist,” by Kathleen Hughes; and a second response, “Liturgy and Church,” by Richard P. McBrien. Also included in this section is a presentation by Mary Collins, “Liturgical Renewal in North America: Issues for the Next Decade.”

The second part consists of talks at the June 1996 conference, entitled “Traditions and Transitions: Culture, Church and Worship”; this conference closed the anniversary year. There are talks by 12 presenters included here, among them Edward Foley, James Schellman, John Allyn Melloh, Richard S. Vosko, Jan Michael Joncas, and John Hibbard, a Canadian and former director of the National Liturgy Office in Ottawa. The topics also cover a broad spectrum, such as liturgical factions, the new sacramentary, preaching, liturgical music, worship environments, the new marriage rite, confirmation, and reconciliation.

An issue that surfaced frequently in the presentations was the tension between change and the resistance to change. While many of the presenters raised further questions related to this issue, they gave, at the same time, some helpful overviews of their topic. Of particular interest is the presentation by Cardinal Danneels.

The Breaking of the Bread: The Development of the Eucharist according to Acts, by Eugene LaVerdiere, SSS (Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications, 1998); 249 pp., $12 U.S.

Eugene LaVerdiere, who has already published a work exploring the origins of the eucharist in the Gospel of Luke, traces the development of the theology and practice of the eucharist in the second of Luke’s writings. Here the term used for the eucharist is “the breaking of the bread” as it was used by Christian communities that were predominantly Gentiles.

The author, who holds a doctorate in New Testament and Early Christian Literature, shows how the mission of the Church and its gathering for the breaking of the bread are inseparable. Whatever affects one, affects the other. And the eucharist is essential to the mission of the Church. In a chapter called “A Covenant of Salt” he describes the significance of
Brief Book Reviews

salt in the society of the time and what it meant when someone "shared salt." In his conclusion he suggests that Luke's account can shed light on today's situation, even for communities that cannot celebrate the eucharist. This book will be a welcome addition to the libraries of those who are interested in the scriptural origins of the eucharist.

The Annual
PASTORAL LITURGY CONFERENCE
Preparation the Church for the Liturgy:
Eucharist as Formation in Faith
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Is our hunger for equality embodied there?

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• Margaret Bick
• Paul Covino
• Catherine Dooley
• Jan Michael Joncas
• John K. Leonard
• Ronald Lewinski
• Robert Ludwig
• John Allyn Melloh
• Melissa Musick Nussbaum
• David O'Brien
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• Tom Tomaszek
• Samuel Tovend
• Richard Vosko
• Christopher Willcock

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• Liturgy and campus ministry and justice • Sunday Eucharist and the parish • Preparing the household for liturgy • Catechumens and the faith of the church • Unity and diversity in the church and the liturgy • Liturgy and youth ministry • Our buildings, our faith, our worship

Two special workshops on leading prayer:
• The basics of leading prayer—form lay persons and deacons
• Presiding at Eucharist—for priests

Answers to questions on page 55
A1. Mackenzie-Fort Smith
A2. London
A3. Whitehorse
A4. 65
A5. 18
A6. 5
A7. Montréal has approximately 6000 religious sisters.
A8. Montréal, Québec and Toronto have three each.

A9. Churchill-Baie d'Hudson, Keewatin-Le Pas, Moosonee, Labrador City-Shefferville
A10. Whitehorse, Prince George, Vancouver, Victoria
A11. Moosonee
A12. Montréal

Answers based on information in the 1998 Directory published by the CCCB.
The Last Word

The National Bulletin on Liturgy is a project of the Episcopal Commission for Liturgy (English Sector). In future issues, this last page will be reserved for current members of the commission. In this inaugural installment of The Last Word an introduction to the commission and its work is provided.

For those of you who may not be familiar with the workings of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops (CCCB), a brief introduction may be helpful. The CCCB offices are located in Ottawa at 90 Parent Avenue. There are quite a number of offices at this location and you will find further information on each of them at our Web site, which is located at http://www.cccb.ca. Each office serves one of the national or sectorial episcopal commissions. The Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops has two Episcopal Commissions for Liturgy: one for French-speaking dioceses, and one for English-speaking dioceses.

The English sector Commission meets four times a year and is assisted in its mandate by the staff at the National Liturgy Office: Donna Kelly, cnd, director; Dorothy Riopelle (secretary), Michael Rucklepaul (data entry clerk) and Margaret Bick (editor of the National Bulletin for Liturgy). The National Liturgy Office can be contacted through e-mail at liturgy@cccb.ca. For information on current projects of the National Liturgy Office see From the National Office in this and future issues of the Bulletin.

The National Council for Liturgy is a body of seven members (two from each region of the country — West, Ontario, and East—and a chairperson) who further advise the Episcopal Commission on liturgical matters and who bring to the Commission and office staff the questions and concerns of liturgy at the diocesan and parish level. The National Council for Liturgy meets once a year with the Episcopal Commission for Liturgy and the staff of the National Office. Several ad hoc committees are also operating at the national level in order to assist the commission and office in their mandate.

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