

## How do we Sabbath well?

**Headline:** The third commandment tells us to keep holy the Sabbath, but how do we do that? Jesus gives us his example by his acts of worship and service. We will discuss how to lead our families into a revival of Sunday as the Lord's day, centered around Mass, familial bonding, and assisting those who are poor, sick, or burdened.

**Objective:** In each of the Gospels, Jesus is confronted by the Jewish leaders about what he and his disciples were doing on the Sabbath. Why? Jesus wanted to correct a misconception about man's relationship with God that is most easily seen in how his chosen people treated the day he set aside. When we focus on the letter of the law and just think about "keeping holy the Sabbath" solely as going to Mass, we fall into the same trap. When Jesus healed on the Sabbath, it may have seemed that he was desecrated the Holy Day, but instead he was freeing the sick, crippled, and ostracized from their burden. Thus, we are called to not forget the Sabbath when we walk through the doors of Church, but instead to use the whole day as memorial to God's complete love.

**Song Suggestion:** Here I am to Worship

### **Bible and Catechism Readings:**

#### **Genesis 2: 2-3**

And 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.

#### **Mark 2: 27-28**

And he said to them, "The sabbath was made for man, not man for the sabbath; so the Son of man is lord even of the sabbath.

#### **Catechism 2173**

The Gospel reports many incidents when Jesus was accused of violating the sabbath law. But Jesus never fails to respect the holiness of this day. He gives this law its authentic and authoritative interpretation: "The sabbath was made for man, not man for the sabbath." With compassion, Christ declares the sabbath for doing good rather than harm, for saving life rather than killing. The sabbath is the day of the Lord of mercies and a day to honor God. "The Son of Man is lord even of the sabbath."

#### **Catechism 2186**

Those Christians who have leisure should be mindful of their brethren who have the same needs and the same rights, yet cannot rest from work because of poverty and misery. Sunday is traditionally consecrated by Christian piety to good works and humble service of the sick, the infirm, and the elderly. Christians will also sanctify Sunday by devoting time and care to their families and relatives, often difficult to do on other days of the week. Sunday is a time for reflection, silence, cultivation of the mind, and meditation which furthers the growth of the Christian interior life.

*All of the Catechism 2168-2195 is instructive here. Excluding Catechism sections 2170, 2175, 2178, and 2184-2185 was extremely difficult.*

**Saint:** In 1998, Pope St. John Paul II wrote the encyclical *Dies Domini* in order to stir up a cultural shift in how Sunday was treated by Catholics. Instead of treating the “weekend” as a time to break from work and focus on the self, he called on the Church to think of Sunday as the firstfruits to the week, giving God the best that we have: <https://www.ncregister.com/commentaries/dies-domini-at-25>

**Vignette:** – Adam tapped his foot impatiently during the homily at Sunday Mass. If this lasted much longer, he wouldn’t have time to finish the report his boss wanted by mid-week before the NFL slate of games started. He was already going to miss part of the mid-afternoon games to take his daughter to her soccer tournament and he was nervous that the tight end on his fantasy team might miss his game and he’d be rushed to find a replacement. At least the tournament was an excuse he could give his mother for missing Sunday dinner for the third time this month. He wasn’t sure how he would tell her that next week’s golf outing was going to make that dinner a wash too. He looked up and saw his daughter looking covertly at her phone. He whispered to her, “What are you doing? We’re at Church and it’s the Lord’s Day! Show God some respect!”

**Questions for Large and Small Group Discussion:**

What does your typical Sunday look like? Is it just like any other day?

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What is the purpose of worship?

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Do you find it hard to rest or worry about not being productive or “getting things done”? Why is rest important?

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Are your/your family’s hobbies (playing or watching sports, reading, building, socializing) getting in the way of your Sabbath? How can they be used in a way that supports familial rapport or serving others?

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Does your Sunday rest cause more work for others? How can that be changed?

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**Resources:**

Listening to Days 281-283 of Fr. Mike Schmitz’s Catechism in a Year podcast is a wonderful way to learn about the Sabbath. He speaks with wisdom and compassion. He is approachable without sacrificing Truth.

**Action Plan:**

In the next week or so, sit around the table and discuss how you, as a family, can work to keep the Sabbath holy through acts of worship, service, and familial growth. If this is difficult because of disparate beliefs within the family, reflect how you, as an individual, can act on Sunday in a way that promotes peaceful rest.

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