

SAINT MARY'S CATHOLIC CHURCH

VICTORIA, TEXAS



THIRD SUNDAY OF EASTER

SUNDAY, APRIL 26, 2020

Dear Parish Family,

This Sunday, we hear from the Gospel of Luke, the account of Jesus appearing to the two disciples on the road to Emmaus. Although they do not first realize that it is Jesus, their eyes of faith come into focus when Jesus takes bread, blesses it, breaks it, and gives it to them. As Christians, we too, recognize Jesus when His priest does those same actions in the Mass.

It is my hope that we will soon have the opportunity to celebrate Mass with a congregation present. Even if the numbers are limited and there are certain restrictions, I pray that Christians who are able, may be given the opportunity to see Jesus “in the breaking of the bread.” Please be patient as we await direction from the bishop and determine how to implement his directives at St. Mary’s. As soon as we are able to make plans for the return of the public celebration of the sacraments, we will include our procedures in our weekly mailout. If you have access, check our website stmvictoria.org for the latest information or call the parish office.

In the meantime, as we continue into the Easter Season, which lasts until Pentecost (May 31st), I have included chapter 2 of Pope St. John Paul II's Apostolic Letter, *Dies Domini* - The Lord's Day, for your continued reflection.

May the peace of Christ be with you always,



Fr. Kristopher Fuchs

CHAPTER II DIES DOMINI

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 which 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 anastàsimos hemèra, 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). 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".⁽¹⁹⁾ 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 which 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 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 which 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 which 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, 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 which observe both the Sabbath and Sunday as "two brother days".⁽²³⁾

The day of the new creation

24. A comparison of the Christian Sunday 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 which summons Christians to remember the salvation which 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 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 which 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⁾

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 which 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",⁽³⁰⁾ but for believers the expression had already assumed a new meaning which was unmistakably rooted in the Gospel.⁽³¹⁾ 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⁾ 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 which 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 which 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. 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.⁽³⁶⁾ 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 which 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 which preserve a week of seven days with a Sunday".⁽³⁷⁾ 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.

(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).

(19) Epist. 10, 96, 7.

(20) Cf. *ibid.* In reference to Pliny's letter, Tertullian also recalls the coetus antelucani in Apologeticum 2, 6: CCL 1, 88; De Corona 3, 3: CCL 2, 1043.

(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 tertia* 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 [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.

(26) Cf. Saint Basil, *On the Holy Spirit*, 27, 66: SC 17, 484-485. Cf. also Letter of Barnabas 15, 8-9: SC 172, 186-189; Saint Justin, *Dialogue with Trypho* 24; 138: PG 6, 528, 793; Origen, *Commentary on the Psalms*, Psalm 118(119), 1: PG 12, 1588.

(27) "Domine, praestitisti nobis pacem quietis, pacem sabbati, pacem sine vespera": Confess., 13, 50: CCL 27, 272.

(28) Cf. Saint Augustine, *Epist.* 55, 17: CSEL 34, 188: "Ita ergo erit octavus, qui primus, ut prima vita sed aeterna reddatur".

(29) Thus in English "Sunday" and in German "Sonntag".

(30) *Apologia* I, 67: PG 6, 430.

(31) Cf. Saint Maximus of Turin, *Sermo* 44, 1: CCL 23, 178; *Sermo* 53, 2: CCL 23, 219; Eusebius of Caesarea, *Comm. in Ps.* 91: PG 23, 1169-1173.

(32) See, for example, the Hymn of the Office of Readings: "Dies aetasque ceteris octava splendet sanctorum in te quam, Iesu, consecras primitiae surgentium (Week I); and also: "Salve dies, dierum gloria, dies felix Christi victoria, dies digna iugi laetitia dies prima. Lux divina caecis 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.

(33) Cf. Clement of Alexandria, *Stromata*, VI, 138, 1-2: PG 9, 364.

(34) Cf. John Paul II, *Encyclical Letter Dominum et Vivificantem* (18 May 1986), 22-26: AAS 78 (1986), 829-837.

(35) Cf. Saint Athanasius of Alexandria, *Sunday Letters* 1, 10: PG 26, 1366.

(36) Cf. Bardesanes, *Dialogue on Destiny*, 46: PS 2, 606-607.

(37) Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, Appendix: Declaration on the Reform of the Calendar.

THIS WEEK AT ST. MARY'S

Saturday, April 25 Feast of St. Mark, Evangelist
 4:00 pm Vigil Mass Mass Intention: Richard Fritz †
 A J Carver †

Sunday, April 26 Third Sunday of Easter
 8:00 am Sunday Mass Mass Intention: Agnes Hajek †
 Willie & Mary Vergara †
 10:30 am Sunday Mass Mass Intention: People of the Parish

Monday, April 27 Monday of the Third Week of Easter
 12:05 pm Daily Mass Mass Intention: Benito & Irene Menchaca †

Tuesday, April 28 Tuesday of the Third Week of Easter
 12:05 pm Daily Mass Mass Intention: Dora Hatch Ortega & family
 3:30 pm St. Vincent de Paul Food Distribution - Annex Porte-cochère

Wednesday, April 29 Memorial of St. Catherine of Siena
 12:05 pm Daily Mass Mass Intention: MaryAnn Ohrt †

Thursday, April 30 Thursday of the Third Week of Easter
 12:05 pm Daily Mass Mass Intention: Glen Bone †

Friday, May 1 Memorial of St. Joseph the Worker
 7am - 7pm Church Open for Individual and Private Prayer
 11:00 am May Crowning & Hour of Reparation
 12:05 pm Daily Mass Mass Intention: Nora Martin †

Saturday, May 2 Memorial of St. Athanasius
 7am - 7pm Church Open for Individual and Private Prayer
 4:00 pm Vigil Mass Mass Intention: Danny Innocenti †
 Anna Bell Pace †

Sunday, May 3 Fourth Sunday of Easter
 7am - 7pm Church Open for Individual and Private Prayer
 8:00 am Sunday Mass Mass Intention: Walter Stevens †
 Don Kruppa †
 10:30 am Sunday Mass Mass Intention: People of the Parish

† symbol indicates the deceased

THE SANCTUARY CANDLE

(no memorial)

THE ADORATION CANDLES

in the chapel
burns this week
in memory of
Benito &
Irene Menchaca
by Benny Menchaca

THE CANDLE IN COMMEMORATION OF THE DECEASED

in the chapel
burns this week
in memory of
Veronica Fossati
Pahmiyer
by Le Anne & Matt Alvarez

**Please contact the parish
office to sponsor these
candles.**

ST. VINCENT DE PAUL SOCIETY

The St. Vincent de Paul Society at St. Mary's continues to distribute food to those in need. Please consider them in your charitable giving.

For sacramental needs (especially confession, anointing of the sick and viaticum), please contact the parish office at 361-573-4328 to speak with a priest.

Please pray for all who are suffering and enduring hardships at this time and for those whose baptisms, first Holy Communions, and Confirmations have had to be delayed.

DIVINE MERCY SUNDAY

Regular Offertory Gifts from April 13-19

Sunday Collection (by mail).....	\$2,420.00
On-line giving.....	\$ 775.00
Total.....	\$3,195.00

Amount needed weekly to meet budget: \$8,085.00

THANK YOU FOR SUPPORTING THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH

On-line contributions can be made through our website:

www.stmvictoria.org

or by mail to

P.O. Box 2448

Victoria, TX 77902