

## **Monday week 23 of Ordinary time**

**(Luke 6:6-11)**

The Sabbath was (and still is) important to the Jews and there were (and still are, for observant Jews) very strict protocols on what can and cannot be done on the seventh day of the week which was a rest day. The third commandment says “Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labour and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God; in it you shall not do any work” (Exodus 20:8). In the first creation account, God “rested” on the seventh day as a sign of completion, and this is a model for us as we all need refreshment (c.f. Catechism 2172). Christians have traditionally kept the first day of the week (Sunday) as the day of rest, because it is the day of the Lord’s Resurrection (c.f. Matthew 28:1). In about 150 AD, St. Justin explained that “We all gather on the day of the sun for it is the day when God, separating matter from darkness, made the world, and on this same day, Jesus Christ our Saviour rose from the dead.”

### **How can we keep holy the Lord’s Day (Sunday)?**

Traditionally Catholics have been “obliged” to go to Mass on Sundays, and although the obligation has not been re-imposed, it is worth considering, do we go to Mass just because we are obliged to or because we want to? Having an obligation gives us some kind of structure and so for many years I went to Mass because I “had” to. I was, to a certain extent, afraid of the consequences of not going.

The celebration of the Eucharist is the single most important thing that the Church does, because in this act, Christ is made present in the form of bread and wine. During the consecration, the priest holds up the bread and says, “this is my body.” However, the Church is also called the “Body of Christ” and so we too are His body. There is only one Jesus, and He only has one Body, so when we receive Him in Holy Communion, our union as one body in Christ is strengthened as we each receive the one Jesus in the Eucharist. This is amazing!

When Pope St John Paul II came to Britain in 1982, he came to my college one early morning, not to address the students but various congregations of religious; (monks, nuns etc.) Students were invited to attend, and we were sitting in a separate block, right in front of the Holy Father. After addressing the religious, he turned to us as said, “As for you, young people, don’t think that being religious is only for those in habits, I challenge you today to make a habit of being religious.”

Keeping Sunday holy helps us, by God’s grace to do just that.