

A Message from Fr. Jim

Keep Holy the Sabbath day! John Paul II reflected on this command (not a suggestion) of God; paraphrasing our holy father, he said, if you really want to know how your relationship with God is look at how you spend your Sunday. Brilliant! Is Sunday too busy that you can't make Mass? If so, then you are not only too busy, but you may be in danger of idolatry! When one chooses to miss Mass on Sunday (Saturday included) for whatever reason, one proclaims that they are more important than the law and command of God (Sickness, emergencies and at times work, and true acts of charity are, of course, valid reasons for occasionally missing Mass).

In Paul's letter to the Colossians, he tells us that "all things were created through Him and **FOR** Him and in Him all things hold together. He is the head of the body the church." Paul continues; "and through Him to reconcile all things for Him, making peace by the blood of His cross..."

The blood of the cross is what we celebrate at the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass! In the chalice the priest holds, that precious blood of Jesus is offered to the Eternal Father so that we may be reconciled to the Father. In Jesus' obedience to the Father (Jesus' passion and death on the cross), Jesus Saves us, Redeems us, Lifts us up from eternal death (Hell) and makes those who are obedient to God's laws, true children of the Father who "worship in spirit and truth".

Jesus' response to the scholar in today's gospel (LK 10:25-37) is "You shall love the Lord your God, with all your heart, with all your being, and with all your strength, and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself."

It is the Mass, the true participation in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus, that is the first and preeminent way we fulfill the command: "Keep Holy the Sabbath". It is the Mass that gives us strength to live up to this command. For it is only Jesus who fulfilled this command perfectly. He was never distracted from this command and yet how many reasons do we give for not being up to it. St. Paul in another place writes; "be strong, for you have not yet persevered to the point of shedding blood." To the point of shedding blood! Is he serious? Maybe we should ask the martyrs. It was the Mass that gave the martyrs strength to lay down their lives so that they could worship God "in spirit and in truth."

It is the Mass that will strengthen you to live according to God's Laws and to be pleasing to Him. How can this be? First, because God has very clearly revealed this desire, and He cannot "deceive or be deceived". Secondly, we hear His teaching, His truth, His love for us, in the readings and then we truly become one with Jesus when we receive Holy Communion. This is what it means to worship Him "in spirit and in truth." This beautiful unity of God and man in Holy Communion deepens and intensifies the relationship between the head of the church (Jesus) and His body (the church). God commands us to keep holy the Sabbath by worshiping Him in the way and manner which He desires, not how we desire or choose. That is why Sunday is a day of worship and rest, so that we can set a specific time and pause from the busy world to be with our creator, our redeemer, our God.

If you love someone they are on your mind, your actions will show your devotion, your words will speak nothing but praise and the good things of one's beloved, and you would do anything to be with that person. We not only show that we love God by being obedient, but in fact, we ARE loving God in the very way and manner He wants to be loved. Don't ever miss a chance to love and be loved. Don't ever miss Mass.

God Bless,
Fr. Jim