



---

**MARK 2:27 And He said to them, "The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath."**

---

For the past few months most of us have been wandering around a liturgical desert, deprived of the sacraments of the eucharist, baptism and confession. In the absence of our regular Sunday mass we have been zooming into different eucharists on the YouTube and Zoom internet platforms, we have been wandering around the world looking for spiritual sustenance, tuning into the Pope on Vatican television, to Jerusalem, to our countries of origin, where mass was celebrated online in our native languages. We were dispensed by the Pope from our Sunday obligation to go to mass, as for most of us it was physically impossible to attend mass.

With the reopening of the churches, it is a good moment to reflect on the purpose of Sunday worship, so that we can return after this eucharistic famine with a renewed faith in the sacraments, and a new hunger to receive them fruitfully.

In Jesus' words from Mark about the sabbath, Jesus makes it clear that we are not doing God any favours by keeping the Sabbath; God lacks nothing and needs nothing from his creatures, otherwise he would not be God. Rather Jesus speaks about God 'making' the Sabbath for man. In

other words, it is man who is the beneficiary when he keeps the Sabbath as God intended; and it is man who bears the loss when he overlooks and breaks the Sabbath.

In the Genesis account of creation God makes many physical things, birds, fish, animals of all kinds, and at the crown of creation he creates man and woman. But at what point did he create the Sabbath; and why?

If you look carefully, you will see that God having created a physical world in which mankind could live, from the chaos which pre-existed and surrounds the world; just take a look at the latest Hubble Telescope pictures; which is already amazing considering the precise conditions that are required for us to live on earth, God then creates a temple in time by blessing the seventh day; in other words no other day had a specific blessing attached to it but the seventh, God never blessed the first, second, third, fourth, fifth, or sixth days in this way.

In keeping the seventh day, the blessing which God attached to this day comes to us. What is this blessing? In heaven all is at rest, all is at peace, and so God through this blessing introduces into creation the possibility on the Sabbath, that by keeping it mankind can partake of the peace and rest of heaven even on earth; in this mankind can harmonise his life with that of the life of heaven. In this man is reminded of his true destiny which is heaven and the life of beatitude with God.

Not keeping the Sabbath means that we run the risk of losing the eternal transcendent dimension of our being, of our vocation to share in God' eternal rest. A real danger today. In a real sense becoming lost from our existential roots in God. Sunday is a dress rehearsal for heaven.

As Christians, we do not celebrate the 7<sup>th</sup> day rest, but the 8<sup>th</sup> day, a day outside of time, the day of Christ's resurrection from the dead, because with the resurrection of Christ the whole meaning of the Sabbath is fulfilled. By sending the Holy Spirit on Pentecost from heaven, Christ introduced us into the peace and blessing which he enjoys with his Father. Just look at the Apostles, after Pentecost they found rest in places which were definitely not comfortable or restful, Peter in a prison; Paul in being persecuted, shipwrecked, and beaten numerous times.

In this very odd period of history which we are living, all are looking for rest, a breather, a place or foothold which seems solid; God calls us to return to the Sunday obligation with a renewed faith – ask him, ask the Holy Spirit, to renew in you your Sunday obligation, not as a law, or a duty, but as a joyful occasion when you can rest in the peace of God, and be renewed by his love after the troubles of a week of toil.

We entrust this return to mass, and all our parishioners, especially those who do not find rest, do not believe in God to, the intercession of Our Lady of Perpetual Help, the Blessed Virgin Mary.

**A prayer to Mary: Remember, O most gracious Virgin Mary, that never was it known that anyone who fled to thy protection, implored thy help, or sought thine intercession was left unaided.**

**Inspired by this confidence, I fly unto thee, O Virgin of virgins, my mother; to thee do I come, before thee I stand, sinful and sorrowful. O Mother of the Word Incarnate, despise not my petitions, but in thy mercy hear and answer me. Amen.**

*Fr David Falcon*

