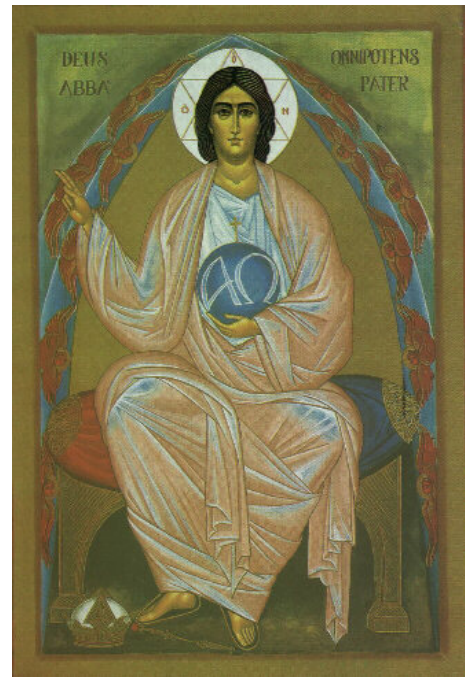


Second Sunday after Pentecost, 2008

“I am the Lord thy God, mighty, jealous, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon their children. ... And showing mercy unto thousands, to them that love Me and keep My Commandments.”

(Exodus 20:5–6)

From the creation of Adam, God has required recognition as the Sovereign Lord of all creation. He has made this clearly known as necessary from all mankind — even, in some mysterious way, enlightening pagan peoples of their need for heavenly assistance. We now live in an atmosphere in which proud man shows a marked indifference towards heavenly powers and the spiritual world in general. The profanation of the Lord’s Day is now widespread even in countries which were most Catholic – our own country included – and we can see the results of this attitude to God and His sacred word.



The following quotation from an ancient liturgy¹ should make each one of us take notice:

*Let all mortal flesh keep silence,
And stand with fear and trembling,
And meditate nothing earthly within itself.
For the King of Kings and Lord of Lords,
Christ our God, comes forward to be sacrificed,
And to be given for food for the faithful.
And the bands of Angels go before Him
With every power and dominion,
The many-eyed cherubim, and the six-winged seraphim,
Covering their faces and crying aloud the hymn
Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia.*

Sister Lucia reminds us in her letter² of the powerful command of God in this matter:

“Six days shalt thou labour and do all thy work. But on the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God; thou shalt do no work on it, thou nor thy son,

¹ *Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence* is derived from the *Prayer of the Cherubic Hymn* from the Litany of St James, written during the 4th century.

² *Calls from the Message of Fatima*

nor thy daughter, nor thy man-servant, nor thy maid-servant, nor thy beast, nor the stranger that is within they gates.”³

The sacred text tells us that God prescribed rest on the seventh day of the week so that it would be a holy-day, consecrated to the Lord in memory of and in thanksgiving for the week of creation. Now these same words of God apply in exactly the same way to us. The Church with divine authority – authorised by God – substituted Sunday for the Jewish Sabbath, in order to commemorate, along with the work of creation, the work of redemption brought about by Christ, our Saviour, who rose again from the dead on Sunday. If we examine the words God uses we see that Sunday is not only a day of physical rest, with abstention from servile work, but it is also and above all, a day to be consecrated to the Lord, a day of prayer in which we encounter God, to thank Him for all His benefits to us, to sing His praises, to remember His infinite gifts in which He has made us sharers, and to ask His help in all our needs.

In former times there were arrangements for children’s catechism followed by Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament, in the afternoon; and in the evening there were devotions for the adults — usually Rosary, sermon and Benediction or Vespers, or the Jesus Psalter – there was a large choice of devotions to accommodate the sodalities and confraternities – and the people were blessed by God in many ways.

So the Church commands us to hear an entire Mass on Sundays and Holy-days. We must not satisfy ourselves by just being present at Mass; we must take part in it. Many are satisfied with having a server as representative; but it is not only the priest who celebrates the Mass. He presides, and consecrates in the person of Christ; but all the faithful, gathered around the altar, live and celebrate the one sacrifice of Christ, and so must be prepared so that giving the responses, praying with the priest, they may, with the priest, draw near to the altar to receive Holy Communion. The celebration of the Eucharist is not a mere ceremony at which we are present; it is a real event in which we meet the living God, in the person of His Son, the renewal of whose Passion, Death and Resurrection we celebrate, and we receive His Body and Blood as the food of our souls as He has told us. Our faith must be firm, because it is nourished and enlightened by the word of God which, for us, is life and light. We are not walking in darkness, we know where we are going, we follow the road which God has marked out for us, we follow Him who said: “I am the way, the truth and the life.” We follow Jesus Christ, the Word of God, the Word of the Father.

Once again it was wonderful to witness on television the Corpus Christi procession in Rome on Thursday last: the Mass at 6p.m., followed by a procession of parochial associations, first communicants, seminarians numbered in hundreds, priests, bishops, cardinals, the “float” carrying the Blessed Sacrament with the Pope kneeling in adoration (flanked by the students of the Irish College, this year); the vast mass of people numbered seventy or eighty thousand; it was glorious to see the Apocalyptic Lamb in triumph, bringing all Rome to a stop. Let us ask the protection and help of the Mother of Christ as we pray for a return to faithful obedience in regard to all the commandments of God and of the Church — so that we may once again witness the vibrant, living Catholic Church in our own land.

³ Deuteronomy 5:13

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