Together & the Bread of Life – Sunday: Day of the Lord

In the Bread of Life Discourse in the Gospel of Saint John chapter 6, Our Lord reveals himself as the Bread of Life that came down from heaven (Jn 6:41-51). Having experienced the absence of the Eucharist during the pandemic, our yearning for Jesus, the Bread of Life, has grown deeper. We continue to reflect upon the importance of the Eucharist in our lives, how it gathers us as the body of Christ, nurtures and strengthens us for our mission and service in the world and ultimately prepares us for the great heavenly feast with God.

"On Sunday, our participation in the Eucharist has special importance. Sunday, like the Jewish Sabbath, is meant to be a day which heals our relationships with God, with ourselves, with others and with the world. Sunday is the day of the Resurrection, the 'first day' of the new creation, whose first fruits are the Lord's risen humanity, the pledge of the final transfiguration of all created reality." "Rest opens our eyes to the larger picture and gives us renewed sensitivity to the rights of others. And so the day of rest, centered on the Eucharist, sheds its light on the whole week, and motivates us to greater concern for nature and the poor." – Pope Francis

The heart of the observance, the celebration, of Sunday, should be Sunday Mass. We gather to do what Jesus commanded us to do in remembrance of Him. We gather to profess faith in His resurrection. It is important that parents teach their children why we go to Mass on Sunday. It is important to share with them the importance of gathering to listen to the Word of God, to be nourished by the table of His Word. And then to share with them the vital necessity of being nourished by the greatest gift: His Body broken and given up for us and His Blood poured out for us. On Sunday, we receive the grace of the Eucharist to help us to live our faith throughout the week, to bear witness to Christ in the community, in our family, and at work. We return to our everyday lives with a renewed commitment to serve God and our neighbor. We are sent forth to evangelize.

Besides Sunday Mass, Saint John Paul II wrote about Sunday as "a day of joy, rest, and solidarity." It's good for us to think about this: is Sunday a day of joy, rest and solidarity in my life and in the life of my family?

Sunday is supposed to be a day of joy because it is the day of the Resurrection. On Easter Sunday, the disciples rejoiced to see the risen Lord. It is day given to us by God for our human and spiritual growth. We can think about how practically we can make Sunday a day of joy — for example, family activities that foster unity and love within the family, perhaps a walk in the woods, a visit to a lake, or a special meal together.

Connected to Sunday being a day of joy is its being a day of rest. Rest is something sacred, as we know from the book of Genesis. Human dignity requires rest and relaxation. It is good to enjoy the beauties of nature – they give rest and peace to the soul. Taking time to relax with family and friends brings depth to our relationships. Sunday shouldn't be a day of emptiness and boredom, but a day to enjoy one another. It also can be day of spiritual enrichment, i.e. a family rosary together, a pilgrimage to a shrine, attendance at a concert, etc.

Besides being a day of joy and rest, Sunday is a day of solidarity. Where do we find joy? In giving of ourselves in love! It doesn't violate the precept of rest to do an act of charity or mercy on Sunday. In fact, what a great day to share with the poor, to visit someone in the hospital or nursing home, to visit grandparents or elderly relatives! Sunday is a day of solidarity, a day to reach out to those who are in need. *Fr Ken*

BEACONS UPDATE: BE HEARD, STAY INFORMED, SIGN UP – Beacons of Light, the archdiocese-wide pastoral planning process currently underway, will impact every parish in the archdiocese, including ours. To stay on top of the latest developments on Beacons of Light, sign up for the free monthly Beacons Update newsletter at www.CatholicAOC.org/Beacons

RCIA FAITH WITNESSES INVITED Will you be a witness on the journey of faith for our RCIA participants? You can volunteer as a sponsor for one of our catechumens or simply serve as a faith witness during our formative sessions.

You need not be an "expert" on Catholic theology - just a faith-filled parishioner willing to share the Catholic life with someone that has answered God's call to join our community.

If you are a fully initiated Catholic (baptized, confirmed, actively participating in the Eucharist) who is at least 18 years of age, please contact your parish office or Charlie Mescher (meschercj@bright.net or 419-586-5618) for more information to find out how you can be a positive influence in our RCIA process. It's an enriching experience for everyone involved.