

TEN COMMANDMENTS

Third Commandment: Keep the Lord's Day Holy



REFLECTIONS

Let us go to the house of the Lord.
(Ps 122)

“Six days you shall labor, 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” (Ex 20: 8–10). The Sabbath is set aside by God to praise Him and all of his works. He established it as a covenant between him and the Israelites to remind them of their rescue from Egypt. God also gave us the story of his Creation of the world; in it we find a model for us to follow. “If God ‘rested and was refreshed’ on the seventh day, man too ought to ‘rest’ and should let others, especially the poor, ‘be refreshed.’ The sabbath brings everything to a halt and provides a respite” (CCC 2184).

In the Book of Exodus, God gives specific instructions on building an ark to hold the Covenant, specific instructions on building the meeting tent, the type of

vestments to be worn by priests, the design of the altar. Through his instructions, he intentionally creates an atmosphere of reverence, importance—something that is very different from the everyday. Read: Exodus 25–31.

Reflect on your clothing when you attend mass. Is it reverent? Is it special or is it the same clothing you would wear to a picnic? Did you just come from a soccer game? Is your clothing chosen because it reflects your importance, wealth or beauty, or because it reflects your love of the Lord?

Are you required to work on Sunday? Is there a late mass that you can attend on Saturday evening or Sunday evening anywhere close to your home or work? How might you keep the day holy? Some ideas might be to make the time before or after your work specifically family-time; offer all your efforts especially that day to God; find a quiet place

on a break to pray and reflect on the readings of the day.

How often have you heard someone, perhaps yourself, say that they don’t need to go to Mass, that they worship God by walking in the mountains or similar? Read the



Catechism of the Catholic Church #2182, for a beautiful answer to that statement.

A Home for God

Whoever loves me will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our dwelling with him (Jn 14:23).

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Ponder these statements: “We must consider how to rouse one another to love and good works. We should not stay away from our assembly, as is the custom of some, but encourage one another” (Hb. 10:24–25). “The celebration of Sunday observes the moral commandment inscribed by nature in the human heart to render to God an outward, visible, public, and regular worship ‘as a sign of his universal beneficence to all’” (CCC 2176). Do I realize that I am a model for my neighbors, my

children, and all who see me by my regular attendance at Sunday mass?

Does my home look like a place where I welcome God? Is it a sanctuary of rest for those who visit me? Does my home reflect my faith? Walk into the door of your house – what do you see? Walk into the dining room – what do you see? Walk into your bedroom – what do you see? An icon, a crucifix, a holy water font? Where do you and your family pray?

ACTIVITIES

For Children and Families

For Families:

1. During the week, preceding Sunday, gather as a family and read aloud the upcoming Sunday Mass readings. Each member of the family can share what stood out the most to them from what they heard in the readings. How do you hear God speaking to you through his word in scriptures? What is God, in his love and mercy, saying to you to help you in the situations of your life today? This weekly practice can lead to a stronger experience of listening to the word proclaimed in Mass each Sunday.

2. For the Christian, Sunday is the Day of the Lord. On Sunday, we gather and celebrate the Mass around the sacred altar of the Lord’s table. Consider your family dining table as an “altar” in the home. On

Sunday morning, is it possible to gather around the table as a family to pray? Perhaps the table can be



covered with a white tablecloth. A candle, a few flowers in a small vase, and a small crucifix may be placed in the center. Is it possible for the whole family to gather on Sunday evening for dinner, to have a nice prepared meal? Perhaps a nice tablecloth and place-settings can be used.

3. Read Genesis 1:1-2:3. God blessed the seventh day and made it holy. On the seventh day, God rested and drew breath (Ex 31:17). Along with the animals, man was created on the sixth day. Because we were created on the sixth day, we are always desiring to enter into the seventh day, to rest with the Lord and to receive the life-giving breath of the Spirit. This commandment has been fulfilled in the Passion, Death, and Resurrection of Jesus Christ. God wants to help us to fulfill this commandment in our lives. Is it possible to do no work on Sunday? Can Sunday be a day for the family?

For Children:

1. Read or have someone read to you: Matthew 28:1-10. What happened? What did you hear? What feelings did the women have? Draw a picture of this event. Write



or dictate a description to go with it. Each Sunday is a celebration of the Lord's Resurrection! It is a day of great joy! To experience this joy, is it possible to make Sunday a day where no complaining, arguing, or fighting is allowed?

2. We remember from learning about the First Commandment that Jesus told us the greatest commandment, "You shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind and with all your strength." How does keeping the Lord's Day holy help us to accomplish Jesus' greatest commandment? List several activities you have done or would like to do with your family on a Sunday. Choose one of the activities and draw a picture of it. Tell someone and/or write about it.

3. The Jewish people, to whom God first made a covenant with the commandments, will pray by blessing God. The Jewish people call the holy day of rest the Sabbath. On this day, they may pray to God: Blessed are You, Lord our God, King of the Universe, who separates the holy from the unholy, light from darkness, the seventh day from six days of labor. Blessed are You, Lord our God, who separates

the holy from the unholy. Amen. On Sunday, you can say this prayer to God. Say, dictate, or write your own prayer to God, blessing him, giving thanks to him, and asking him to help you keep this day holy.

For Youth

1. Throughout Church history, the Sabbath has been called the Lord's Day. It is a day totally for God! This month, do your homework for Monday on Friday or Saturday. This is a way to set aside Sunday for God.

2. In Genesis, God rested after he created. In this way, God set the example for the Lord's Day. It is a day set apart. This month try not to make any extra or unnecessary trips or cause others to work unnecessarily on Sundays. For example, if you need to start Christmas shopping, do it on Saturday instead of Sunday, or make lunch at home rather than going out to eat.

3. Take time on Sunday, to consecrate the whole day instead of just an hour for mass. Spend extra time, apart from mass, reading the readings for the day. Read and talk about them with your family.

For Young Adults

1. As Catholics, we come together as a family to worship our almighty God every Sunday in the celebration of the Holy Mass. We also receive the body, blood, soul and divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ in the Eucharist. This gift of Jesus calls us to reflect on giving our own life as a total gift. How can you grow in the example of Jesus in giving your life as a complete gift to others?

2. In ColumbiaCatholic's youtube video, "The Third Commandment," Fr. Dan O'Reilly discusses the importance and sacredness of the day of the Lord's resurrection, Sunday. He challenges the viewers to try to move activities that one would normally do on Sunday's, but don't highlight the importance of the Lord's resurrection, to other days of the week (ex. mowing the lawn, shopping, doing laundry). Can you move certain activities you have reserved for Sunday to other days of the week to make more time for worship, prayer, family and community building, serving God's Kingdom and rest on the day of the Lord?



For Adults

1. Search for and watch “The Third Commandment: Love the Lord’s Day” on Formed.org. The video begins with a couple of minutes of music to help you pray and focus.
2. Pray by reading Hebrews 10:19–25. This is St. Paul’s instruction in keeping holy the Lord’s day. Unfortunately, like today, many of

the Christian faithful then would lose focus and stop coming to the Eucharistic celebration each week. In prayer, consider how God is calling you to “encourage” others to keep holy the Lord’s day.

3. Read paragraph 16 of *Veritatis Splendor*. You can access this in your binder provided by the parish or online by searching for “Veritatis Splendor.” Jesus invites the young man in the parable found in

Matthew 19 to become a “perfect” disciple. This may sound almost impossible and without God’s help it is. How does keeping holy the Lord’s day help us become more perfected disciples? What promises does God make in the Mass to assist us in our growth as disciples? We invite you also to listen to the second episode of our new podcast “Gratia Plena: A St. Mary Podcast” available on our website, Apple and Google Podcasts, and Spotify!