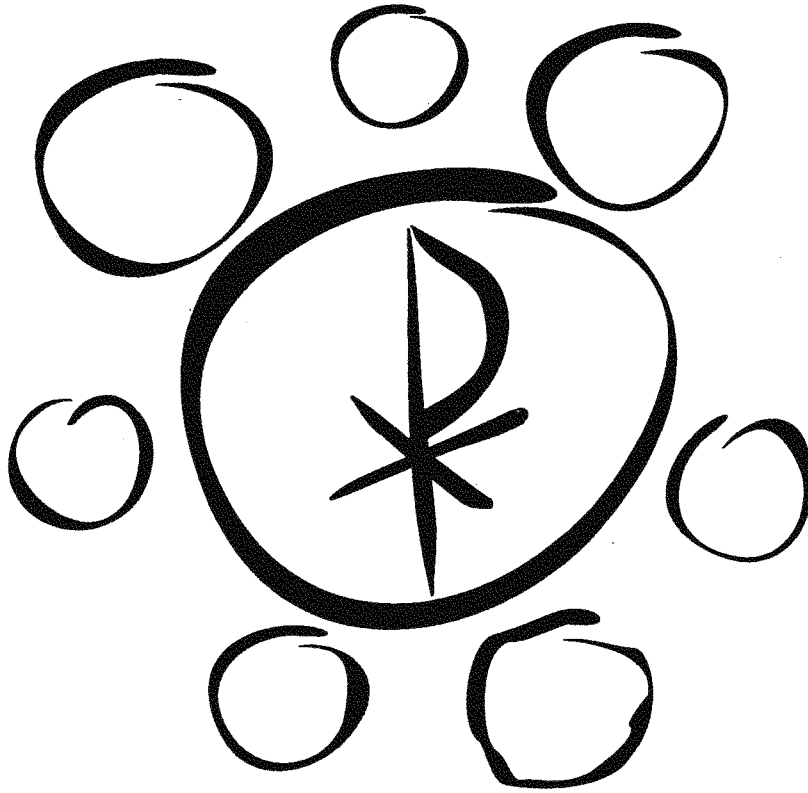


# Family



*the  
DAY  
of  
the  
Lord*

A resource from  
the Bishops'  
Committee for  
Family and for Life

## **Celebrating Sunday**

A parish kit to rediscover  
the Day of the Lord

**In a nutshell**

**Rediscovering  
the  
Day of the Lord**

**When:**

Any Sunday. However:

- ❖ Specially recommended for World Meeting of Families with the Holy Father, Rome, Oct 15<sup>th</sup> – a time of solidarity with Catholic families around the world.
- ❖ Also appropriate for: Marriage or Family Sunday in your diocese.

**Background:**

- ❖ Celebration of the Great Jubilee and the start of the third millennium.
- ❖ Though the 'Day of the Lord' is for each individual, it lends itself naturally to strengthening family bonds.

**The aim of *this* communication:**

Encourage:

- ❖ Reflection on our priorities and lifestyle.
- ❖ Recognition of the importance of Sunday in setting the tone of the rest of the week.
- ❖ Practical steps for making time for God in our lives.

**This kit contains:**

1. A reproducible leaflet: '*Day of the Lord.*'
2. Bulletin clips and homily notes.
3. A copy of Landmarks No.15 '*Sunday – The soul of our week.*'

**Thank you  
for celebrating  
the gift of family life**



**A letter to  
parish  
personnel**

Dear Friends,

Earlier this year, nearly a thousand Catholic families around Australia responded to a simple request for feedback on family life.

Families spoke about the importance of family time – family holidays together, family meals shared together and leisure time spent together. Many said that Sunday – the day of the Lord – was a day of the family.

Families also spoke of the rapid pace of modern life and the number of good things that distract us from spending time with our loved ones and from giving time to God.

Clearly, many people yearn that family life, particularly on Sundays, should be different. However, often they feel helpless to change.

Our own faith experiences tell us that change is possible. We have the promise of the continued presence of the

Holy Spirit. Our Sunday liturgies continue to be opportunities for mutual support in the fundamentals of our faith.

With this in mind, the enclosed parish kit is offered for use in parishes around Australia. It is simple and can be used flexibly according to local and diocesan needs.

It contains catechetical points based on the Holy Father's document *Dies Domini* (On keeping the Lord's Day Holy).

This kit is specially recommended for Sunday Oct 15<sup>th</sup> to coincide with the World Meeting of Families with the Holy Father in Rome. Affirmation and practical support for family life on this day can promote a sense of solidarity with other families and with the universal Church.

Thank you for your ongoing support for families.

Yours in Christ,

*Leonard A. Faulkner*

Archbishop Leonard Faulkner  
Chairman, *Bishops'*  
*Committee for Family and for Life*

## Bulletin Clipboard\*

### Sundays are special.

For Christians, Sunday is more than just a day off – it is *the Day of the Lord*. It is our 'weekly easter' when we take time to refresh our inner spirit, rediscover life's deeper riches, and celebrate the gift of our faith in the risen Jesus.

### Helpful hint for making Sundays special.

Perhaps some Sundays our well-intentioned plans will go awry. It's okay! Don't give up. It takes persistence to keep Sundays holy. Even the 'trying' helps to orientate our lives towards God. And our children will *know* that we are 'trying'. Whatever happens, planned or otherwise, approach it in a spirit of faith.

### Suggestions for making more of Mass.

If you live alone, arrange to go to Mass with a friend.

Allow the prayers to touch your joys and sorrows.

After Mass, stop and chat with your brothers and sisters in Christ.

Revisit the Gospel during the day.

In a kitchen table discussion with the family, take up the topic of today's homily.

### A Sunday suggestion:

Make the family meal special. It will deepen your sense of eucharist. It is also a material way of reaching out to friends, neighbours and those without families around them.

\* Clipboard items adapted from The Story Source handout: '10 ways to celebrate the Day of the Lord'

## How to use this kit

The basics:

1. Decide the most appropriate Sunday to focus on the Day of the Lord. (Recommended date: Oct 15th – in solidarity with families around the world).
2. Photocopy the handout Day of the Lord and distribute at Sunday Mass.
3. Consider:
  - a) adding clipboard items to bulletin on that Sunday (or subsequent Sundays.)
  - b) providing copies of Landmarks issue on Day of the Lord; also encouraging reading or purchase of original papal document (*Dies Domini – On keeping the Lord's Day holy*, St. Paul's Publications, Homebush [Sydney] 1998).

## Homily Thoughts

(Twenty-eighth Sunday; see also Landmarks No 15)

Today, hundreds of thousands of families from all over the world, including Australia, are meeting with the Pope in Rome. It will be a giant celebration of family life.

In solidarity with these families and with the universal Church, parishes around the country have been asked to reflect today on family issues and in particular on the way we celebrate Sundays.

Not long ago, the Holy Father wrote a letter entitled 'On keeping the Lord's Day holy'. He began by pointing out what we all know: life today is hectic; there are more and more good things to do on a Sunday – sporting events, work, study, social events, Sunday's bargain sales.

The trouble is that it can all get out of hand and we end up finding that we can't relax with family and friends, let alone find time for the Lord.

The first reading today begins with the words 'I prayed, and understanding was given to me; the spirit of Wisdom came to me'. When we set aside time for communication with God, then we grow in the understanding and knowledge of God. That is a precious gift, far greater than anything that we could gain for ourselves by extra work or study or sport.

In today's Gospel Jesus tells the rich young man of a new way of gaining eternal life – one that is even better than following all the religious rules. It is to follow the person of Jesus – to know him and to be like him. To do that, we need to gain the freedom of not being tied down all the time to the affairs of daily life.

Observing Sunday as the Day of the Lord is a great way to put this into practice. It is a call to free ourselves of having to rush after every good thing that is available on a Sunday and start by making the Lord the number one priority.

Sounds impossible? 'Sure', Jesus tells the rich young man, 'but nothing is impossible for God'.

### Additional suggestion:

At the end of Mass, a brief sharing by 2-4 people on their attempts to observe Sunday as the Day of the Lord.

This parish kit is also available on the Australian Catholic Bishops website:  
[www.catholic.org.au](http://www.catholic.org.au)

When we make a priority of a special event - like Christmas or a birthday - we start to arrange our lives around it. As the months and years go by, it becomes a family tradition, something that helps us to 'be' family. We can do the same with Sundays!

Family time can be a time of grace that gradually builds our family up, and that draws our lives closer to one another and to God.

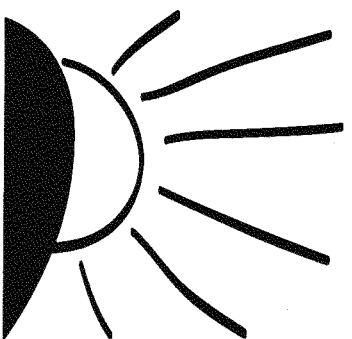
- Think about your family Sundays. What moments or activities can be built upon?
- Talk with the family about making some family time on Sunday - listen to everyone, be patient, persistent and flexible.
- Set the example of making this family time a priority.
- As the lives of family members change, be ready to re-negotiate family time.

A journey is a series of steps. As we journey through life, what steps can we take so that we will grow in relationship with the Lord?

Published by the Australian Bishops' Committee for Family and for Life. September, 2000.

This leaflet may be reproduced.

Earlier this year nearly a thousand Catholic families around Australia responded to a simple survey on family life as part of the *Family: Dare to Dream* Conference held in Melbourne, 28-30 April 2000. Some of their stories and insights appear in this leaflet.



*'Our family life is a bit hectic. My husband works six days a week. I work three days a week. On the two days I have off, I do housework, shopping and deliveries for our business. Sundays is usually spent with all of us doing something together - visiting friends, going to the market or just relaxing at home watching a video. Every day we discover something new about our children, how they grow so quickly.'*

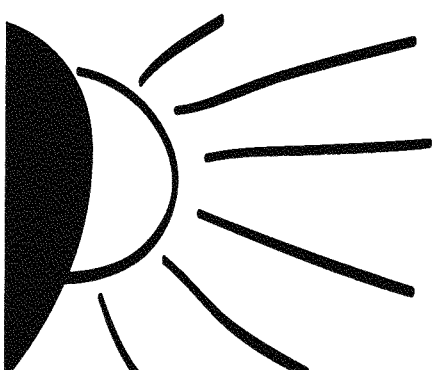
*'Sunday lunch is our big family time. During the week we all have things to do which means that we don't often sit down together. Often we even go to different masses. But Sunday we all sit down together to a big roast lunch.'*

**Discovers**  
the **DAY** of the **LORD**

# the DAY of the LORD

## Day of discovery

**'I strongly urge everyone to rediscover Sunday. Do not be afraid to give your time to Christ.'**



*'Sunday is family day. In the morning we go to church. After mass we go for coffee at the local coffee shop. The children usually have hot chips while we have hot coffee. We discuss what to do that day - like visiting friends, going for a drive, or maybe going to the playground.'*

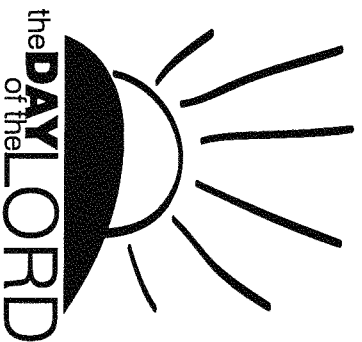
1. *Days Down - On Keeping the Lord's Day Holy*, St Paul's Publications, Homebush (Sydney) 1998.

With these words<sup>1</sup>, Pope John Paul II recognised a paradox of modern life: there are so many good things we can do on a Sunday that we can become 'ragged round the edges'. We can lose sight of what is most important - our relationship with God and the people God has put in our lives.

The Pope's answer is both simple and challenging: to bring order into our lives by putting God first.

A simple test of this in practice would be to reflect on each of our Sunday activities. Then ask ourselves: does *this* activity bring order into my relationship with God, with my family, my friends?

Time is precious to us. People often say: 'Time is money'. Perhaps we could ask ourselves: how will we spend our time? Who will we spend it on?



**'The Sunday celebration of the Lord's Day and his eucharist is at the heart of the Church's life'**  
Pope John Paul II DD, 32

*'Sometimes we visit grandma and go to the beach. Sunday is a day my family is together.'*

*'On Sunday I take my son to basketball and my daughter comes along. We leave my husband asleep because he works very long hours and he experiences lots of stress at work. When we come home I organise a packed lunch and we go on a picnic as a family. After our picnic we come home and get ready for church. After church we have a family dinner and enjoy the rest of the evening together.'*

To rediscover Sunday in today's society it helps to look back on our traditions and forward to plan for our future challenges. The tradition of the Day of the Lord is a gift that comes to us from our Jewish ancestors in faith. To keep the Sabbath is the third of the Ten Commandments. The Pope reminds us that these are not just rules but 'pillars of the moral life inscribed in the heart' and 'the defining expression of our life with God'.

### **From Sabbath to Sunday**

The early Christians, in their exhilaration after the Resurrection, moved the Lord's Day to Sunday, the first day of the week. They wanted to start their week by celebrating with their loved ones the presence of the risen Lord in their midst.

We follow in the footsteps of those first Christians. Down through the ages, Sunday has brought a healthy rhythm into daily life. It has traditionally been a day set apart:

- a day of rest,
- a family day,
- a day of prayer,
- a day of celebration,
- a day for coming together.

in the name of the Lord.

### **The Day of the Church**

But at the heart of the Lord's Day is the eucharistic gathering. The whole parish community comes together to celebrate the mystery of Christ's death and resurrection. This builds Christ-centred community which flows on to the family gatherings of the day and sets the pattern for the rest of the week.

Rediscovering Sunday is a personal journey of discovery for each of us. Each person, each family, each community, can enter into this journey with flexibility. (Sometimes a sense of humour helps!) The Day of the Lord should be a time that nourishes us, brings peace and order into our lives.

### **Living Sunday well**

It is special time:

- Time to thank and praise our God,
- Time to go out together,
- Time to sit down to a meal,
- Time to talk to each other,
- Time to listen to each other,
- Time to delight in each other's interests,
- Time to reflect on God's presence,
- Time to be for each other,

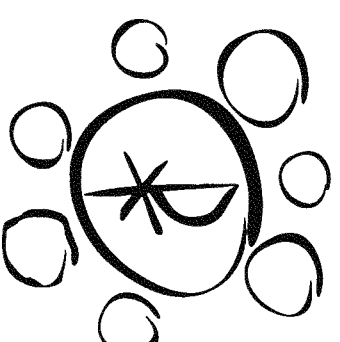
simply because we're God's people.

Everything that we do in the Lord's name is part of our spiritual journey. A simple family barbecue can help set the day apart. A Sunday meal, with all its ups and downs, can be a eucharistic coming together of the body of Christ.

The actual things we do may not be important in themselves. What is crucial is the recognition of the centrality of the Lord in our lives. Christ lives in us! We are an expression of his continuing presence in the world.

### **Sunday, soul of the week**

Christ lived among us, gave everything of himself for us and overcame death so that we can live forever with him. That is what we celebrate in the eucharist. The rest of Sunday helps us to continue that celebration and to live it out during the week.



### **Day of discovery**

**'Time given to Christ is never time lost, but is time gained.'**  
Pope John Paul II DD, 7

*'I love Sundays! In the morning I go for a swim or a run before Mass. Later I might play my favourite CD while I tidy up the house.'*

*'On Sundays I often babysit my sister's children for about an hour while she goes for a walk.'*

*'Sunday is great. Dad is home and we do lots of stuff together. I pray at night. I love my Mum and Dad through the good times and the bad. Every Sunday night we sit down and eat dinner together.'*

*'On Sundays everybody wakes up at different times and then we have breakfast together.'*