

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

The Third Commandment to keep holy the Sabbath day completes the first section of the Ten Commandments which deals with our obligation to love God.

For the Jews, the Sabbath is a Saturday. According to the Genesis creation story it is the day on which God rested. The Sabbath is therefore observed as a day of rest. It is also observed as a memorial of the Jew's deliverance From slavery in Egypt, and the prophets teach that it is a day "of protest against the servitude of work and the worship of money."

After the resurrection, the first Christians began to keep the Sabbath as "the Lord's Day" and the celebration of the Jewish sabbath was merged into a weekly celebration of the Resurrection of the Lord--which the early church fathers understood as the "eighth day" of creation--the day of God's re-creation of the world through Christ's redemption.

We are therefore called to celebrate the Lord's Day by attendance at Mass. As Catholics, this is how we "keep holy the Sabbath Day". A Catholic's obligation to attend Mass is paramount. Putting attendance at Mass first in our lives is a way to put God first in our lives. When we neglect our Sunday obligation, we are telling God that other things are more important in our lives.

The commandment to keep holy the Sabbath Day is not only the opportunity to put God first in our lives through worship, but the command to take a day of rest is also our way of publicly stating that God is more important than our work and our efforts to make money.

The way we keep Sunday special is up to us, but the church still teaches that we not only have an obligation to attend Mass, but we must also take a day for rest and recreation. Do you and your family take time and effort to keep Sunday special? The way to do this is to plan quality family time, to visit loved ones, to reach out to the needy and to offer hospitality.

Sunday is meant to be a joyful celebration of life. Don't waste it on work and make it just another day to earn money. Instead keep Sunday as a day of generosity, joyful relaxation, and thanksgiving for God's blessings.

Your Pastor,
Fr. Longenecker