



From the Pastor  
3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Easter - A  
April 23, 2023

**THEY CAME TO KNOW HIM IN THE BREAKING OF THE BREAD.**

In the bulletin article two weeks ago, on **Easter Sunday**, we wrote about today's **Gospel** of the two disciples on the **Road to Emmaus** who came to know the **Risen Lord** in "the breaking of the bread." [Luke 24:35] Last week, we wrote about the **2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Easter's Gospel** in which **Saint Thomas** tried to get to know the **Risen Lord** without joining the other **Apostles**. For 2,000 years, many have also tried to know **Jesus** without coming to **Sunday Mass** or receiving the **Eucharist**. Here are some of the reasons why the **Catechism of the Catholic Church**, based on **sacred Scripture**, has a 'Sunday Obligation' weekly gathering rule:

**"On Sundays and other holy days of obligation, the faithful are to refrain from engaging in work or activities that hinder the worship owed to God, the joy proper to the Lord's Day, the performance of the works of mercy, and the appropriate relaxation of mind and body. Family needs or important social service can legitimately excuse from the obligation of Sunday rest. The faithful should see to it that legitimate excuses do not lead to habits prejudicial to religion, family life, and health."** [CCC #2185]

**..."Sanctifying Sundays and holy days requires a common effort. Every Christian should avoid making unnecessary demands on others that would hinder them from observing the Lord's Day. Traditional activities (sports, restaurants, etc.), and social necessities (public services, etc.), require some people to work on Sundays, but everyone should still take care to set aside sufficient time for leisure... In spite of economic constraints, public authorities should ensure citizens a time intended for rest and divine worship. Employers have a similar obligation toward their employees."** [CCC #2187]

**... "those who deliberately fail in this obligation commit a grave sin."** [CCC #2181] Notice it does **NOT** say it is a 'mortal' sin, which requires three conditions: it must be a **serious** matter [which it is] - **knowledge** [you know ... or should know ... that it is wrong!] and **consent** [you must **freely** choose it, even though you know it is wrong].

There are legitimate reasons for missing **Mass**, like: being ill; caring for an infant or sick person; it's physically or morally impossible, as on a cruise ship that offers no **Mass**, navigating flooded or icy roads, etc.; the **Priest** does not show up [trying to get to another church is **commendable**, but not **required**]; children or those unable to drive but have no one to drive them; etc. [cf: CCC #2181] However, while those who fit these categories are **not** guilty of **sin**, they are **still obligated** to "**keep holy the Sabbath Day**" by spending some time in prayer, alone or with others, watching a broadcasted **Mass**, etc. [The COVID caused dispensation from **Mass** is long over, as is simply watching **Mass** via the media!]

**Pastors** are permitted to **dispense from** - or just **commute** [suggesting alternative ways to **keep Sunday holy**, like meditating on the readings, etc.] - those who **know in advance** that they will be **unable** to participate in **holy Mass** on a **Sunday** or **Holy Day of Obligation**. Travelling or vacationing of itself does not excuse us, unless getting to **Mass** creates an undue burden. The 1983 **revised Code of Canon Law** **removed** the stipulation that 'as long as I get in before the **Gospel** and stay until the **Priest's Communion** I've fulfilled my obligation' notion. If we're late because of **unforeseen** circumstances [traffic, accident, issues with children, etc.] or must leave early for a valid reason, we fulfill our obligation. **Why** we were late/left early determines if we did or did not fulfill the obligation.

While **Saturday** was the **Sabbath Day**, that was changed when **Jesus** rose from the dead on the eighth day, the first day of the week, and appeared to **Mary Magdalene**, the **Apostles** in the **Last Supper's Upper Room**, the two disciples on the **Road to Emmaus**, and the previously absent **Saint Thomas** ... on a **Sunday**. Thus, the **Apostles**, to whom **Christ** gave the power 'to loose or to bind,' began to meet weekly on **Sundays** - a tradition the **Catholic Church** has kept ever since.

So, **Holy Mother Church**, who knows what is best for her children, lovingly obligates us to come together each **Sunday** or **Saturday night** to hear **God's word**, receive **Jesus** in the **Eucharist**, and support each other! **Happy Eastertime!**

In Christ,

*Father Mark*

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