

# Diocesan Liturgical Commission Christchurch

Newsletter N° 30 – March 2008

To: Priests and Pastoral Assistants  
Parish Liturgy Committees  
Directors of Religious Studies  
PPRE Teachers



## REMEMBER TO KEEP HOLY THE SABBATH DAY

### 1. WHAT IS OUR CHRISTIAN DUTY?

God blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy. On the seventh day of creation we remember God's rest, and also the liberation of Israel from slavery in Egypt as well as the Covenant which God sealed with his people. (CCCC 450)

The Sabbath was changed to Sunday because Sunday is the day of the Resurrection of Christ. As the first day of the week (Mark 16:2) it recalls the first creation. As the "eight day" it symbolizes the new creation ushered in by the Resurrection. For Christians it has become the first of all days and of all feasts. It is the "day of the Lord". (CCCC 452)



### 2. THE TRADITION OF THE CHURCH : THE MASS

Since the resurrection of Jesus, the paschal mystery—the life, death, resurrection and coming in glory of Christ—has been a central

mystery of the faith. The Mass is our sacramental participation in the Passover of Christ. It is the complete way of celebrating Sunday. For this reason the Church has never ceased to remind the faithful that God calls them to assemble on Sundays for the Eucharistic celebration. No other day can equal Sunday as the day of Christian assembly. On Sundays the faithful are obliged to assist at the Mass (Canon 1247). Sunday is thus the day when Christians rediscover the Eucharistic form which their lives are meant to have.

### 3. SUNDAY ASSEMBLY WITHOUT MASS : WHAT IS OUR CHRISTIAN DUTY?

The Eucharist is truly the source and summit of the Church's life and mission. The Sacrament of the Altar is always at the heart of the Church's life and mission: thanks to the Eucharist, the Church is reborn ever anew. What should we do, though, if there is no Sunday Mass in our Church?

Whenever possible they should endeavour to attend a neighbouring parish where the Mass is celebrated. If, due to the lack of a priest or some other serious reason, participation in the Sunday Mass is impossible, the faithful are strongly encouraged to gather in the parish church for a Liturgy of the Word with or without the distribution of Holy Communion.

It is a fundamental duty for the community to worship God. Together the people give praise to God, listen to His word and possibly receive Holy Communion. Even though the priest is absent, Jesus himself is present in His gathered people (Matt . 18:20), in His word and most especially in Holy Communion.



The Sunday assembly of the local community strengthens its faith and life, continues to support the catechesis of adults, children and youth, and makes visible the local Church as a part of the Universal Church. Participating in the Sunday liturgical assembly with all our brothers and sisters, with whom we form one body in Jesus Christ, flows from a Christian conscience and at the same time it forms that conscience.

In pastoral practice, parishioners may require help to understand the importance of participating in the Sunday assembly in their communities when the Mass is not celebrated. Whether the priest is present to celebrate Mass or not we are strongly encouraged to join the Sunday parish assembly and remember God's precept: Remember to keep holy the Sabbath day.

*Reference: Compendium of the Catechism of the Catholic Church. (CCCC)  
Sacramentum Caritatis: Benedict XVI (2007)  
The Code of Canon Law*

### Diocesan Newsletters:

- ◆ God's Masterpiece: the Seven Sacraments of the Catholic Church
- ◆ What is Liturgy?
- ◆ Witnessing to our Faith at Mass.

These are available on line at: [www.chch.catholic.org.nz](http://www.chch.catholic.org.nz)

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