

In our life journey which day is most significant? Which day would carry the most weight?

The day of our birth, death, marriage, divorce, school, graduation, employment, promotion, retirement, communion, anointing of the sick? What day among all of these days that carries such attention in our mind, impacts our heart, and inspires our life?

Asking this question helps us to remember the days of our life, puts our journey in perspective, and moves our days forward with enthusiasm. The significance of any day depends on the event of the day and our experience of it. There are so many days to consider but none is more significant than the Lord's Day. It is so significant that if today is our last, we would like to have it on the Lord's. If we only have one day in our life this day would be it. And if we could have our first day of life back and begin everything anew, this day would be the one. It is the Lord's Day. It is the day of the Lord to be with us and with one another. It is the day that we set aside to meet the Lord with all of his magnificence of heaven and earth. It finalizes all the days of our life and initiates the new day ahead. It pulls all the loose ends together and presents us with a fresh life package for the journey ahead. It centers our weekly activities and breaks open the richness of life.

In our Catholic heritage, the Lord's Day is the first day of the week. It is when the Apostles meet the risen Christ for the first time since His crucifixion. He has just died and risen again. In this act, Christ has finalized creation and renewed the face of the earth. Christ has put death where it belongs and salvaged the lost humanity. Christ has brought the confused disciples to the new height of faith formation. When we come to Sunday that is what we remember. We remember the Lord's Day and the new beginning of our days. The center of the Lord's Day is the Eucharist celebration. It is the highest point of the whole day when we gather around the table of the Lord to break bread, listen to the Word, and form the Body of Christ among the faithful and its shepherd. While the hour of the Sunday Eucharist is the highest time of the Lord's Day, the Lord's Day is the culmination of all other days. Our weekly journey begins and ends with this day of the Lord. It is our journey of faith that we center around this day. It is the cycle of life that we participate as God first created the universe.

Since the Lord's Day is the culmination of all days and the Eucharist is the summit and the source of Christian life, what we do before and after this day is critical. What we do Monday through Saturday to prepare for Sunday is indispensable. The quality of our Mass experience is correlated to the quality of our preparation. Like climbing Mount Everest, what we do at the home base will

determine the successful summit at the mountain top. And what we see from the mountain top will alter our life forever.

To realize the Lord's Day to its utmost value and quality, there are 5 steps involved in a whole and integral journey. The Lord's Day unfolds through the steps of *invitation, preparation, celebration, commission, and mission*.

Invitation to the Lord's Day:

We come to Sunday Mass because it is what the Lord has in mind for us. He loves us to be with Him and invites us to do so. Knowing that the Lord is calling us is an incredible blessing and privilege. We are receiving this divine call with humility and joy. We are yearning for this loving and eternal invitation which comes from the first breath of God's creation and at the last words of the Lord's Supper. We are personally called. This invitation comes at the cost of Christ's sacrifice on the cross. It is mailed to us with love to the last breath from the crucified Lord.

Preparation for the Lord's Day:

We are called! Now is the time of our response! Are we marking the Lord's day on our calendar with bold print? Are we getting ready as an individual and as a family? How ready are we in our body and soul? Is there any obstructive temptation to give us an excuse from going to

the House of the Lord? Is there any re-arrangement of priorities and activities we need to make? Are we in the state of grace? Do we need to reconcile ourselves through the sacrament of penance? Do we keep our fast to purify ourselves before receiving communion? What do we bring to the altar? Do we return to the altar with God's gifts of time, talents and treasure that he entrusted to us. Are we really His stewards in tangible accounts? This is our check list before we go to the summit and the source of our life. We check this list in our daily prayer and consciousness. In doing so, we are building the momentum of grace to go to the day of all days.

Celebration on the Lord's Day:

The heart of the Lord's Day is the Eucharist celebration. The Eucharist is our communion with Christ and Christ's church. It brings us into total union with God and God's people. In this union we share one life and one mission with our Lord. We come to Eucharist with who we are and we leave it with who Christ is. In this exchange of union we realize Christ in our midst and Christ makes us whole in His kingdom. We become Christ's body and Christ ours. It is the heart and soul of our weekly faith journey. It is truly the fountain and the destiny of our life. We come to the Eucharist to fully participate as it would be the last, the first and the only occasion of our life.

Commission on the Lord's Day:

At the end of Mass we are commissioned. We are sent to "go in peace to love and serve the Lord." This sending charges us with soothing inspiration and direction for another week. We now can stand in for Jesus to love and to serve. We are now authenticated to be the church's sign of faith and witness of faithfulness. We are now authorized to live our vocation, to do God's will, and enjoy the freedom from selfishness and worldliness. We are confirmed that our intention and action will be divine initiative. We are on the way with Christ to the world with praise and thanksgiving.

Mission from the Lord's Day:

Celebrating Mass brings us a great joy and peace. Leaving Mass gives us an opportunity to bring this peace and joy to the world. As the Lord has called us to gather around the table of fellowship, he has commissioned us to bring this fellowship table into the world: "Go and baptize all nations in the name of the Lord!" Bring people into the fold of God's children. Let them know that they are our brothers and sisters and treat them with dignity. We are saved so others can be saved. Our salvation depends very much on how instrumental we are of God for others. Our mission is to seek God first and above all things, and let the whole world know that the reign of God is at hand. The time is now, return to the Gospel. Welcome to the Lord's Day.

The Lord's Day

All our days lead to

The Day of the Lord

flows into all our days

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