
UNFORGETTABLE MOMENTS



Do you sometimes wish you could relive certain events or encounters? Recall the remarkable family reunion that occurred last summer: all the children were there, along with the family friends. It was a terrific experience to meet one another, to be together, to share memories and family meals together... Remember the New Year get-together: We knew very well that the grandparents would not be with us much longer, but still, what a wonderful day it turned out to be for the whole family! And think also about the more ordinary moments when it is good to spend time together... very simply... with nothing else in mind but to be together. Think about the visit you made to the hospital to see a loved one, and how you would have liked to stretch the visiting hour...

THE HISTORICAL EVENT

It was the same with Jesus' first disciples. Witnesses of all that had occurred since the baptism of Jesus in the Jordan until the day of the Resurrection, they were enthralled with this amazing spectacle: the one whose death on the cross they had witnessed had come out of the tomb alive and resplendent in his glory... Never in the entire history of humankind had such an event been produced. The resurrection of Jesus became the pledge that all his disciples would one day experience a similar resurrection. This had to be celebrated! The world had to be told of the event.

A NEEDED REVALUING

In my first Pastoral Letter (21 May 1994), I earnestly asked that we continue to give our Sundays all their value. At that time, I wrote the following: "Sunday is the Day of the Lord: the way it is celebrated is an indication of our faith in the Risen Christ, a sign of our hope and an opportunity to grow in love as members of the same Christian community. We must rediscover together the deep meaning of Sunday and celebrate it with the entire community: it is a day of joy and celebration, it is a day like no other day, it is the day that the Lord has made.

I am asking you to revalue the Day of the Lord for what it is: a period set aside for the family to get together, share together, celebrate together, and pray together."

A THANK YOU TO OUR PASTORS

These past few weeks, the priests and pastoral agents of the diocese were asked to search for ways to revalue the Day of the Lord. I want to thank them for having looked into this together. It is incumbent on us all that we find the most effective ways to highlight the Day of the Lord. If we the baptised and confirmed do not estimate that Sunday has a special value, who will? It could well be that unbeknownst to us we are truly losing the meaning of Sunday and living it like any other ordinary day, one just like the others.

EACH MINUTE IS PRECIOUS

It is true that every day is holy, since the coming of Jesus in our midst. Truly, in coming among us Jesus gave an infinite value to all human life and to every minute, every day, every hour, every week, every year of our existence, but it behooves each disciple, each community to recognise at the deepest level the greatness of each day, and more particularly of Sunday. Before looking at the different ways of highlighting each Sunday, it was important to give the reasons for its being special. To celebrate Sundays, to keep the Lord's Day is to highlight the central event of humankind, the Resurrection of Jesus, and to proclaim our own resurrection.

IT ISN'T EASY TO TALK OF THE RESURRECTION!

In an ever more secular world, in a world that has become more and more pluralistic, it isn't easy to profess our belief in the resurrection of Jesus... and in ours. Hence when we go to the funeral home or when the issue of life after life is raised, it is not always possible to talk at length on the subject; one judges that it is perhaps more prudent or more "timely" to be discrete and to show one's friendship by maintaining a respectful silence. Is it a question of human respect or an absence of proselytising? For some, there is nothing beyond death... but for all who believe in Christ life is not destroyed but transformed, and when one's sojourn on earth comes to an end, one already has an eternal dwelling place in heaven. This is the profession of faith that we make at Christian funerals.

THE ABC OF REVALUING

I believe that if we are to give Sundays their full value we must find the original meaning of the first Sunday: the event of the death-resurrection of Jesus. Let us try to imagine what this first Sunday was like for Mary Magdalene, for Peter and John, for Thomas, for the Apostles, for Mary, for the disciples... It was such an event that every first day of the week (or every eighth day) everyone would gather together to commemorate it.

TRADITION CONTINUES

It is quite incredible that after twenty centuries we continue to commemorate this event... all over the world! Even last Sunday, in the midst of persecution, courageous Christians met together to mark the day. Even last Sunday, millions of Christians of all confessions gathered among themselves to commemorate the Risen Christ, since the future of every human being depends on it. Even last Sunday, throughout the 33 parishes of our Diocese, thousands of believers gathered together to celebrate the presence of the Living Jesus and to proclaim his coming again. This is the very heart of Christian faith. At the heart of all the changes we have experienced in our country and our Church these past years, the major and fundamental element of our faith remains the same: Jesus, yesterday, today, and tomorrow. He has died, he is risen. With him we will rise again. This is our faith.

Have a good week, and a good Sunday!

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