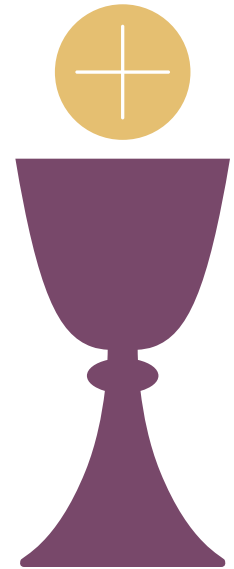


# Easter Every Sunday

*"What wonderful times we shared." "Hurry up, you're late!"  
 "Time stood still." "I'm counting the days 'til the kids come home."  
 "Will tomorrow never come?" "I know my days are numbered."  
 "She's watching the clock." "Relax—we have all the time in the world."*



Human life exists in time. Each person's life unfolds over time, made up of a finite number of days, weeks, months, and years. Yet all time is not the same. There are moments when we are impatient and eager for time to pass. On other occasions time seems to "stand still": the moment is full of serenity, complete and whole. In daily life we may struggle to manage time, organize time, keep up with the passage of time, and use time wisely. Yet there are also occasions when time seems to be pure gift. Time is the subject of some of our deepest anxieties and regrets, but also the vessel of our joys, promises, and hopes.

## ETERNITY, CREATION, AND TIME

To be human is to live in time, but also to long for eternity. Built into our very nature is the capacity to know that our contingent, time-bound life is not all there is. God is eternal; he exists outside of time. To be in relationship with God is therefore to touch eternity. Faith changes the landscape of our imagination, allowing us to discover time in new ways—not as a mere procession of days, but as a gift of our Creator.

In the story of creation, from the Book of Genesis, we read that day and night take shape under God's guiding hand. When the biblical account says, "Evening came, and morning followed," this refrain is not simply a statement of fact. It stands as witness to the beauty and order that God has ordained for our world. As day after day unfolds, and the world comes into being, "God saw that it was good."

It is not surprising, therefore, that believers understand and perceive time in light of faith. The patterns by which we organize and live out our time are not merely functional or practical, but express a faith-filled perspective on the meaning of life.

## THE ORIGINS OF SUNDAY

Christians inherited from their Jewish forebears a seven-day week, corresponding to the seven days described in the creation story in the Bible (Genesis 1:1–2:1). What the early Church brought to this experience of time, however, was a striking new element: the resurrection of Jesus. Christ was raised from the dead on "the first day of the week"—Sunday. So, whereas the Jewish people centered their week on Saturday, the day on which God rested, in the Christian week Sunday became the high point, because of the Resurrection. Sunday was—and remains—our weekly celebration of Easter.

For the Fathers of the Church, Sunday also had a mystical significance. It was "the eighth day," pointing to the future fulfillment of all God's promises at the end of time. Knowing that God created light on the first day of creation, they noted the fact that Jesus was raised from the dead on the "day of light." On Sunday, in this mystical view, creation and redemption met. Hope of future glory filled the hearts of the faithful. They touched eternity.

## A RENEWAL OF SUNDAY

Blessed John Paul II explored the rich theological meaning of Sunday in his apostolic letter *On Keeping the Lord's Day Holy* (1998). He offered pastoral guidance to strengthen our experience of Sunday—with the celebration of Eucharist at its heart. In this letter, he called for Sunday to be renewed in the lives of the faithful as a “day of joy, rest, and solidarity.”

Sunday is the day the whole Church comes together for the eucharistic assembly. It is a day of joy, when we are more than ever aware that the Risen Lord is in our midst. “The festive character of Sunday Eucharist expresses the joy that Christ communicates to his Church through the gift of the Spirit,” John Paul wrote, “Joy is precisely one of the fruits of the Holy Spirit (cf. Romans 14:17; Galatians 5:22)” (56).

In the rhythm of work and rest, Sunday also plays an essential role. “Rest is something sacred, because it is a way for men and women to withdraw from the sometimes excessively demanding cycle of earthly tasks in order to renew an awareness that everything is the work of God” (65).

Finally, Sunday is a day for works of mercy, love, and service. Sharing what we have with the very poor has been part of Christianity from the beginning, as John Paul explained: “Far from trying to create a narrow ‘gift’ mentality, [St.] Paul calls rather for a demanding culture of sharing, to be lived not only among the members of the community itself, but also in society as a whole” (70).

To keep the Lord's Day holy is to honor basic Christian values: worship of God is central, while care for ourselves and solidarity with others complete the picture.

## SUNDAY MASS

Eucharist may be celebrated on other days too, of course. Yet the unique qualities of Sunday make it the premier setting for celebrating the Eucharist (Saturday evening

Mass is included as part of Sunday, in the Church's calendar). Eucharist, in turn, imparts to Sunday its deepest significance. Christ is risen. He is in our midst.

For people today who lead busy and often stress-filled lives, Sunday can be a true gift. Participation in Sunday Mass, to celebrate the Lord's Day, calls us back to an awareness of God, of salvation in Christ, and of the eternal horizon of our faith.

## REFLECT

Take an inventory of things you typically do on Sunday. What are the high points? Low points? What could make this day more truly a “day of light” for you?

## ACT

Put more joy into your Sunday. Choose one action that brings you joy and treat yourself to it on Sunday. Could that action be one of sharing?

## PRAY

O God of Creation, thank you for the gift of time. Help me to cherish the rhythms of my life, and to honor you through all of them. Keep me ever mindful of the resurrection of your Son, who illumines our days and draws us into his own, wonderful life.



**AUTHOR** ■ Rita Ferrone is an award-winning writer and speaker in the areas of liturgy, catechesis, and renewal in the Roman Catholic Church.

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