

Weekly Message from Fr William for Thirtieth Sunday in Ordinary Time 2022

Dear People of St Mary's, it was a good turnout for our parish Service of Anointing last Sunday. Thank you to the SVP and all who helped support the event.

I'll be coming back to Pope Francis' letter on the Sacred Liturgy, *Desiderio Desideravi* because there's still much to be gained from it.

Meantime, do you remember a document put out in April last year by the Bishop's Congress called *The Day of the Lord*? I kept it on the website homepage for a year or so. It was an invitation, even a call, to come back to church when covid measures and restrictions were being lifted. Here's quoting from it:

'At this moment we need to have in our sights the need to restore to its rightful centrality in our lives the Sunday Mass, encouraging each to take his or her place once again in the assembly of our brothers and sisters.'

It has been the tradition of the Church from earliest times to come together each Sunday to celebrate Mass. Why Sunday? Because Sunday is the day of the resurrection, the day Christ rose from the dead. It is the *Day of the Lord*. This is why Sunday is called the Lord's Day.

This task of restoring to its rightful centrality in our lives the Sunday Mass goes hand in hand with restoring in our minds the centrality of the day Sunday itself – to see Sunday as the 'soul of the week', as it puts it in this document *The Day of the Lord*.

The secular term 'weekend' is useful shorthand for Saturday + Sunday. But it has its drawbacks. It contributes to this loss of a sense of Sunday as special, and we begin to lose our sense of the Day of the Lord when we talk about Sunday masses as 'weekend Masses'.

In fact in our Christian spirituality Sunday is the first day of the week, and Saturday is the last day of the week. Remember John 20 and the account of the empty tomb: 'It was very early on the first day of the week and still dark, when Mary of Magdala came to the tomb.'

Introducing an extra Sunday mass on Saturday evenings as we did back in the 1970s has been an important pastoral provision. But it means we've got to make the mental effort to remember that it's a Sunday mass, and not a Saturday mass or a weekend mass. If we keep this in mind we will be helping in this task of 'restoring to its rightful centrality in our lives the Sunday Mass', and Sunday itself as the 'Day of the Lord'.

God bless you



Thirtieth Sunday in Ordinary Time, 23 October 2022