

Weekly Message from Fr William for the Second Sunday of Easter 2023

Dear People of St Mary's, Easter Sunday is the first and original feast day in the Church's calendar. And from the earliest days of the Church its members came together each Sunday to celebrate the Eucharist, so that this first day of the week became a weekly celebration of the Lord's resurrection.

On Sunday we have a common assembly of all our members, whether they live in the city or the outlying districts. The recollections of the apostles or writings of the prophets are read, as long as there is time. Then the president of the assembly speaks to us: he urges everyone to imitate the examples of virtue we have heard in the readings. Then we all stand up together and pray.

This is from the writings of St Justin Martyr, describing the way the Sunday Eucharist was already being celebrated in Rome by around AD 150. Then after describing how the Liturgy of the Eucharist was celebrated at that time he goes on:

We hold our common assembly on Sunday because it is the first day of the week, the day on which God put darkness and chaos to flight and created the world, and because on that same day our saviour Jesus Christ rose from the dead.

(from the First Apology of St Justin Martyr, Cap 66-67: PG 6, 427-431))

We know from today's second reading that although the first Christians, being Jewish, went to the temple every day, it was in their own houses that they met for the celebration of the Eucharist, 'the breaking of bread', probably in the larger houses of the Christian community, as the community continued to grow in number.



Today, this Second Sunday of Easter, the Octave Day of Easter, serves to highlight this recurring celebration of the Lord's Day, the day he rose from the dead.

For a bit more on the Lord's Day and what the Bishops of England and Wales have said recently, see my weekly message 23 October 2022

Happy Easter!

*William*

Second Sunday of Easter, 16 april 2023