

9B

- The Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead occurred on a Sunday (see Jn. 20:1-9). The Holy Spirit came down on the apostles on Pentecost Sunday. For Christians, Sunday came to be called “the Lord’s Day.”
- The tradition of Sunday worship has been handed down from the apostles themselves. It is first documented in Scripture itself, when the Acts of the Apostles records a group of Christians having gathered together “to break bread” on the first day of the week i.e. Sunday. (Acts 20:7).
- This could be understood merely as having an ordinary meal, but from other early Christian writings we know that the phrase “to break bread” referred to the celebration of the Lord’s Supper - what we today call the Mass.
- Very early Christian writings give clear witness to this tradition. [The Didache](#), written in the first century is held in high esteem. It speaks of gathering together for the Eucharis every Lord’s Day.
- In about 107 AD, [St. Ignatius of Antioch](#) specifically wrote of the deliberate replacement of the Sabbath with Sunday: “Those who lived according to the old order of things no longer keep the Sabbath, but the Lord’s Day” (*Ad Magn.* 9, 1; CCC 2175).
- Around 155 AD, [St. Justin Martyr](#) wrote to the Roman emperor: “On the day we call the day of the sun, all who dwell in the city or country gather in the same place” and he then goes on to describe an early version of the mass, many elements which we’ve retained to his day.
- Worshipping God at Mass on the Lord’s Day is an obligation to be taken seriously. The first precept of the Church spells out the Catholic’s obligation to attend Mass on all Sundays (and holy days of obligation).
- Missing Mass through one’s own fault would be considered sinful unless there are mitigating circumstances such as illness or if you depend on others to take you to Mass, or if the weather is atrocious, or if you can’t find a church or if you’re a child or a teenager and there is no one to go with you. The church is an understanding mother, not a slave driver.
- By participating in the celebration of Mass, we show that we belong to a community of faith, and that we are faithful to Christ and his Church.
- God has designed us for lives that have a rhythm of work and rest. We sanctify the Lord’s Day not only by participating in Mass, but also by resting.
- Of course, work cannot entirely be removed from Sundays. Hospitals and nursing homes must be staffed, and children need care. However, we must be

careful not to develop habits that make Sunday like any other day of the week.

- Only rarely does shopping need to be done on Sunday. The lawn can be mowed and the car washed another day. Children's sports need not take up Saturday and Sunday either.
- Finally, Jesus' example shows that good works, such as care for the sick, infirm, poor, and elderly, are ways to sanctify the Lord's Day. But these should not unduly take us away from the claims of the family.
- In a culture that seems to force us to live at an ever-faster pace, the Church's reinforcement of God's commandment to rest, relax, and enjoy the day are especially relevant.