

The Day of the Lord

The Day of the Lord – Sunday – has always been a day of special focus for us, as Christians, with its profound connection with the day of the Lord's Resurrection. Sunday is a day which is at the very heart of the Christian life. Every baptised Catholic has a duty to keep Sunday holy, particularly in participating in the Celebration of Mass. Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, the way in which we have gathered for the celebration of Mass has changed profoundly. For a time, we were deprived of the sacraments; where the celebration of Mass could only be watched at arms-length via live-stream. Since the gradual easing of lockdown measures, and society moves forward to a new 'normal', it is wonderful to see so many people back at Mass over the weekend. I know that there are many more who continue to participate in the celebration of Mass on the live-stream.

On Advent Sunday, the beginning of the Church's new liturgical year, it is the intention of the *Bishops' Conference of England and Wales* to re-introduce the Sunday obligation to attending Mass. In their letter, the Bishops' reflected that: *"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"*.

The restoration of the 'Sunday obligation' offers us, as a parish family, an opportunity to not only reflect upon our own participation in the Sacred Liturgy, to invest anew in the weekend celebrations of the Liturgy, but also to discern new ways to reach out and invite back those people of our families and community who have lapsed or fallen away, for whatever reason.

As a parish family, I would like to explore the Bishops' request to restore Sunday to its "rightful centrality" by focussing on three areas of the Sunday experience: Gather, Celebrate, Connect. Each of these elements brings with them significant aspects of parish life to reflect upon and discern. More information about these elements will be made available in the future.

Focus on Sundays – I would like to create a Parish Focus Group, with the specific task of reflecting prayerfully upon those three elements of celebration noted above. If you would like to be involved in the Focus Group, please contact me directly.

Please keep the ongoing mission of the parish in your prayers. COVID-19 has changed the way in which every sphere of life works – this includes our missionary mandate. This is an opportunity for reawakening and renewal. Let us place ourselves vulnerably into the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

Yours in Christ, Fr. Daniel