

THIRD SUNDAY AFTER THE FESTIVAL OF HOLY CROSS **(OCTOBER 1ST 2006)**

Dearly beloved:

Next Sunday, October 1st is the Third Sunday after the Festival of Holy Cross. In the Holy Gospel reading, Jesus tells his disciples the primary intention behind the commandment requiring us to keep the Sabbath holy.

In the Gospel, Jesus had gone out for a walk with his disciples on a Sabbath day. As usual, the Pharisees were on the watch to find anything in Jesus' behaviour that was against their rules. It happened when Jesus was passing through the grain fields on the Sabbath, His disciples began plucking and eating corn from the fields on Sabbath. As we can see it in the Gospel, the religious leaders confronted Jesus on this issue. The disciples were also scolded by the Pharisees. The Pharisees said to Jesus that the disciples are doing what is not lawful on the Sabbath. In defending his disciples, Jesus argues and answered them from the scriptures that when King David and his men were fleeing for their lives, he entered the house of God and ate the consecrated bread, which was lawful only for the priest to eat and he also gave it to his companions. Jesus said to them "The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath. So the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath.

To have rest on Sabbath is meant to remember and celebrate the goodness of God's great work. It was a day set apart to praise God and His work of creation and it was intended to bring everyday work to a halt and to provide needed rest. The Sabbath was instituted to benefit, and not to burden us.

The Hebrew word *Shabbath* means to cease, stop, be at a standstill, stop working, and take a holiday. The fourth of the Ten Commandments tells us to remember the day of Shabbath. Six days you shall labour and do all your work. But the seventh is a Sabbath to the Lord your God; you shall not do any work. The commandment about work and rest does not tell us what day to begin counting. The Jews viewed Sunday as the first day of the week, so they rested from Friday evening to Saturday sundown. Muslims take off on Friday. Even though we might have to work on Sunday, Christians chose Sunday as their day to meet in Jesus' name. That was because Jesus rose on Easter Sunday, came again to meet with the disciples the next Sunday; the day of Pentecost was also a Sunday.

"Lord, May we honour all Sundays as a day holy to You – And may we always treat others with the same mercy and kindness which You have shown to us".

Please read the following Bible verses, in preparation for this Sunday's commemoration.

Bible readings for Sunday, October 1st, 2006.
(Third Sunday After the Festival of Holy Cross)

Before Holy Qurbana:

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| Genesis | - | 42: 18-35 |
| Proverbs | - | 1: 2-9 |
| Isaiah | - | 48: 12-16 |

Holy Qurbana

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| General Epistles: | Acts | - | 7: 2-5 |
| Epistles of St. Paul: | Romans | - | 8: 1-11 |
| Holy Gospel: | St. Mark | - | 2: 23-28 |

With prayers,
Thomas Alex