

LITURGY NEWSLETTER

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A quarterly newsletter prepared by the National Liturgy Office
of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops

A few weeks ago we quietly began a new liturgical year. A few weeks hence, we will celebrate the beautiful and tender feast of the Nativity of the Lord. After the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord, we will begin the shorter period of Ordinary Time (although in our culture this already begins on January 2nd.) Then comes the Lent and Easter cycle, after which the longer segment of Ordinary Time brings us back again to Advent Christmas and Epiphany. The new Ordo arrives, the decorations go up and the cycle repeats itself. Along the way there are a few major Feasts and Solemnities, not much noted anymore since the reduction in the number of Holy Days of obligation. In the words of a song from the 60's "What's It All About, Alphonse?"

In the January-February, 1975 (no. 47) issue of the *National Bulletin on the Liturgy*, the editorial says: "Day by day we are to continue to grow in wisdom, age and strength before God and others (man), preparing for the Lord's second coming in majesty and glory. To do this, however, each parish and community needs to take a fresh look at each season and feast, **and to understand what we are celebrating, and why.** We should also be prepared to consider areas of further purification or reform, the possibility of different calendars in different parts of the Church, and the desirability of making sure that any new celebrations harmonize with the liturgy. In this way the liturgical year will continue to reflect the Church at prayer in each age." (NBL no. 47)

In the coming issues of the *Newsletter* we will include reflections about the Liturgical Year with a view to helping us to better understand what we are doing and why. Although this comes to you in the midst of the Advent Christmas cycle, this first reflection deals with the centrality of Sunday in the lives of Christians. "Sunday is the first day in the Christian liturgical year. It is the *original feastday* (Constitution on the liturgy, no. 106), the heart of the calendar. Standing in the fore in some centuries, obscured in others, the Lord's day is the *basis* and the *nucleus* of the liturgical year. (NBL, no 47.)

On Pentecost Sunday, 1998, Pope John Paul II issued his encyclical letter "*Dies Domini*", the "Day of the Lord". It is truly a gem of an encyclical and a great gift to the Church. Perhaps you could make it a Christmas gift to your parish (perhaps to be unwrapped during Lent) or community by organizing a parish mission or day of reflection on the wisdom in this document. Margaret Bick, a liturgist from Toronto, has done some excellent work on this text and she shares some of her experience with the readers of this newsletter.

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Fond Farewell: Maureen Shaw retired from her position as secretary of the National Liturgy Office on May 31, 2001. Although we congratulate her and rejoice that she can now spend more time with her children and her beloved grandchildren, we hate to say good-bye. During her time here she served the office well with her competence, warm personality and generous sense of service. Thank-you for everything Maureen.

At the same time, we welcome our new secretary, Jessica Rached. Jessica has been with us only a short while but she brings many talents to the office and we are very pleased to have her with us. If you visit us on the right day, you might even get treated to some of her Lebanese pastry.

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This past November, the feast of the Dedication of St. John Lateran fell on a Sunday and took precedence over the readings of the Sunday. This office received a number of queries about this and although this situation will not happen again for a few more years, since it relates to the issue of the primacy of Sunday, Dr. Susan Roll has prepared a short article on the importance of this feast.

“The first generation of Christians chose the first day of the week (our Sunday) as the Lord’s day, and in this way, made it the foundation of the liturgical calendar as it developed through the next twenty centuries.” (NBL no. 47). As we begin our series of reflections on the Liturgical Year, let us also begin with the first day of the week — Sunday.



Father Bill Burke
Director, National Liturgy Office

LIKE UNDERWEAR FOR CHRISTMAS?

AN UNDERAPPRECIATED GIFT — THE GIFT OF SUNDAY

THE SUNDAY OBLIGATION

A couple of years ago a national brand bakery ran a commercial on television in which children are complaining about their parents’ attempts to give them a healthy lunch: “There are peas in my brownies!” “There’s broccoli in my cake!” they complained. And, on a similar front, I can still see the look on my 16-year-old nephew’s face when his mother let it slip that the birthday cakes she had baked her sons all their lives were laced with a cup a shredded carrot. These peas, broccoli and carrots are clearly underappreciated gifts, something like underwear for Christmas. And that’s what this article is about: an underappreciated gift – the gift of Sunday.

As we shall see, Sunday is truly a gift. However, as a child, I would not have considered Sunday as gift. Our family had certain Sunday restrictions, rules and customs. Perhaps you recognize some of them: If you can’t go to church, you can’t go out to play. Sunday dinner is special. (Ordinarily this would not be a bad thing, but despite my parents’ valiant efforts to cook a tender, juicy roast beef, it never worked out that way.) Sunday is dress-up day and visiting day. Have a bath Saturday night and in the morning put on your good (i.e., uncomfortable) clothes.

In general, my childhood Sundays seemed to be all about avoiding the near occasion of the sin of having fun. And even the stuff I was allowed to do on a Sunday was curtailed because the parents of my best friend – Ukrainian Catholics – were even stricter than mine. She couldn’t come out to play at all! And, shut indoors, she couldn’t make noise, listen to the radio or dance.

POPE JOHN PAUL II'S "DIES DOMINI"

But, in 1999 it all changed for me! On Pentecost Sunday in 1998, Pope John Paul II had issued a letter to the Church concerning Sunday, in Latin "*Dies Domini*," in English "The Lord's Day" or "The Day of the Lord." In contrast to the stark commandment of the Mosaic law, "Remember to keep holy the Lord's Day" and the Church's rather dryly worded precept to "assist at Mass on all Sundays and holy days of obligation," *Dies Domini* offers us a rich vision of the Lord's Day and invites, allures and seduces us into that day, that vision.

I spent a year working with *Dies Domini*, preparing study materials to appear in the *National Bulletin on Liturgy* (nos. 156 and 157). At first I thought Pope John Paul II was simply trying to sugar-coat a somewhat outmoded and increasingly ignored Church rule. But as I got deeper and deeper into the text, I got it! I came to see two things: 1) Sunday is indeed a gift, a time to learn and relearn joy, and 2) my life was so out of whack that I couldn't see the gift.

My job involved communicating with people all over the country. Even my "boss" was a six-hour drive away. I lived on my computer. I checked my e-mail every half-hour seven days a week. And I felt compelled to respond to each one immediately. This pattern built on habits honed during my thirty-year teaching career. During those years, Sunday afternoons and evenings were spent on final preparations for the week's lessons.

Dies Domini called me to a different way of life. My "conversion" was difficult but life-changing. I began by vowing not to turn on my computer on Sunday – cold turkey. This is a battle I fight with myself week after week to this day. The next part was much easier: no more Sunday workshop or meetings. The result: I was forced to come up with something I should be doing instead. I was forced to rediscover and relearn joy.

And I know I am not alone. We live in a workaholic society that lures us all into a sick life-style. A large percentage of Canadians refuse to use their vacations days. What can the weekly gift of Sunday mean to someone who won't even take an annual vacation? But for we who want to change we don't have to look far for guidance; Pope John Paul II was way ahead of us. He called Sunday a gift given by God to humanity: "This vision of faith shows the Christian Sunday to be a true 'time for celebration,' a day given by God to men and women for their full human and spiritual growth" (58).

DIMENSIONS OF SUNDAY

Throughout his letter, Pope John Paul II opens up several dimensions of Sunday. The first is rest, in which our lives can come back into proper perspective and balance. Another is peace, in which we take "quality time" with others and opportunities to learn harmony of life from the natural world. A third is solidarity – in which we look around to find others in need and seek authentic ways to be in solidarity with them. Last, but certainly not least is celebration – the whole day is celebration. "Sunday is not only the remembrance of a past event: it is a celebration of the living presence of the Risen Lord in the midst of his own people" (31). "But in virtue of its significance

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By a tradition handed down from the apostles which took its origin from the very day of Christ's resurrection, the Church celebrates the paschal mystery every eighth day; with good reason this, then, bears the name of the Lord's day or Sunday. For on this day Christ's faithful are bound to come together into one place so that; by hearing the word of God and taking part in the eucharist, they may call to mind the passion, the resurrection and the glorification of the Lord Jesus, and may thank God who "has begotten them again, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, unto a living hope" (1 Peter 1.3). Hence the Lord's day is the original feast day, and it should be proposed to the piety of the faithful and taught to them so that it may become in fact a day of joy and of freedom from work. Other celebrations, unless they be truly of greatest importance, shall not have precedence over the Sunday which is the foundation and kernel of the whole liturgical year.

Sacrosanctum Concilium §106

as the day of the Risen Lord, celebrating God's work of creation and "new creation, Sunday is the day of joy in a very special way, indeed the day most suitable for learning how to rejoice and to rediscover the true nature and deep roots of joy" (57). Pope John Paul II is insistent that the whole day, and not just our time inside the church building, includes these elements.

What stands out in his letter is the way he opens up for us what in fact we were trying to achieve by the rules we learned in childhood, however many, or strict they were. Although it is to be a day of rest, celebration, peace, joy and solidarity, it is not rest, celebration, etc., for their own sake, nor is it meant to cast negative light on those things we are invited to set aside. Pope John Paul II paints for us a picture of Sunday not as a prison that restricts – "You can't do that it's Sunday", but as a gift that frees – "It's time for something better."

So for my Ukrainian friend who grew up thinking there was something spiritually wrong with music, that God doesn't like music and dancing, His letter is good tidings indeed. A better interpretation of this rule would be to say that this is the day to spend time with the people you neglect during the week, to do things with them that you don't get a chance to do during the week.

A PEAK MOMENT WITHIN SUNDAY

Sunday is for human growth to a fully human life and a fully spiritual life. Our rest, celebration, peace, joy and solidarity, become intensified and prominent in the Sunday eucharist. They are part of our reverence for Sunday and the eucharist. The Sunday eucharist, whatever time we celebrate, is the moment of peak intensity of Sunday.

And so Pope John Paul II says: "Mindful of this, the Second Vatican Council recalled that efforts must be made to ensure that there is 'within the parish, a lively sense of community in the first place through the community celebration of Sunday Mass" (35). And "It is also important to be ever mindful that communion with Christ is deeply tied to communion with our brothers and sisters. The Sunday Eucharistic gathering is an experience of brotherhood, which the celebration should demonstrate clearly, while ever respecting the nature of the liturgical action. All this will be helped by gestures of welcome and by the tone of prayer, alert to the needs of all in the community" (44). And further, "Sharing in the Eucharist is the heart of Sunday, but the duty to keep Sunday holy cannot be reduced to this. In fact, the Lord's Day is lived well if it is marked from beginning to end by grateful and active remembrance of God's saving work. This commits each of Christ's disciples to shape the other moments of the day – those outside the liturgical context: family life, social relationships, and moments of relaxation – in such a way that the peace and joy of the Risen Lord will emerge in the ordinary events of life" (52).

FROM SUNDOWN TO SUNDOWN

Sunday Mass is not to be an interruption or time out from the weekend. It is the watershed of Sunday. The whole day is to be coloured by the eucharist. Eucharist adds a further dimension; it calls for a sacred dimension to everything we do before and after.

Sunday, the day, is itself a call to worship. Christ has chosen Sunday to call us to worship. As the day of his resurrection, the first day of new creation, Sunday belongs to Christ, our Risen Lord. In the world of Jesus, Sunday was just another day, the day after Sabbath. The day of rest is over; life gets back to its routine. The rest of the Roman world knew no compulsory weekly day-off, not even Sabbath. In modern North American society, Sunday seems to be devolving. Wide-open Sunday shopping completes Sunday's melting into a new "48-hour day" now known as "the weekend."

For many, if not most, North Americans, the Saturday half of weekend is for at-home chores and partying; the Sunday half is for shopping and maybe visiting. Grocery stores in my neighbourhood are now busier on Sundays than on Saturdays. In much of North America, in the twenty-first century, there is little one cannot do during the Sunday half of the weekend.

But for the Christian, Sunday is unique among days; it is not simply the better half or any half of a weekend. Sunday is a liturgical day. A liturgical day runs from sundown to sundown, rather than midnight to midnight. (A misunderstanding of the reason why it is acceptable to celebrate Sunday Mass on Saturday night has led some to suggest a move to a simple weekly check-in, leaving the choice of day up to the individual.) We inherited this sundown-to-sundown concept of the day from our Jewish ancestors in faith. The Christian Sunday begins at sundown on Saturday evening and ends at sundown on Sunday evening. Those who pray the liturgy of the hours on Saturday evening turn to a page labelled for the first prayer of Sunday – Sunday Evening Prayer I. Those who celebrate eucharist on Saturday evening are celebrating the first eucharist of Sunday. Although it is sometimes referred to as an "anticipated Mass" or a "vigil Mass" it is a Mass of the Lord's Day. The Lord's Day usually begins in a parish with the Saturday evening Mass. Those present at the Saturday evening Mass are welcoming and opening the Lord's Day on behalf of the rest of the Church. Sunday is closed by those who celebrate evening prayer on Sunday evening – Sunday Evening Prayer II.

In the fourth chapter of *Dies Domini*, Pope John Paul II also points out that the Christian Sunday is also the *dies hominis*, day of humanity. We are so accustomed to calling Sunday the Lord's Day, that we lose track of the fact that it is also our day; God has given it to us, shared it with us. There might be some who would call this claim unchristian. This kind of accusation was made against Jesus, who said "The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath" (Mark 2.27). But taking a cue from Christ himself, Pope John Paul II presents the rhythm of a weekly day of obligatory rest as vital not only for Christians, but for all of humanity. He speaks of the "sacredness" of rest as a source of renewal. In this fourth chapter we catch Pope John Paul II in a particularly tender moment. He points out that laws concerning Sunday rest have always flowed from a concern for servants and workers, to give them rest and to free them to keep the day holy. Pope John Paul II lists such freedom, rest and relaxation among the requirements for human dignity. He calls us to be mindful of situations around the world and in our own country in which work is oppressive, characterized by miserable working conditions, long hours, injustice and exploitation in the work place. Pope John Paul II goes on to assert the human right to meaningful

In Canada, our own ancestors showed the same fidelity to Sunday worship. Especially in less populous areas, and even to relatively recent times, lay people frequently led the local community in Sunday prayer in situations where Mass might be celebrated only quarterly or even twice a year.

*Sunday Celebrations
of the Word and Hours*

We ought to be together. We cannot live without the Lord's meal; it is more important to us than life itself."

Pliny, *Epistola*, X

Linked from the beginning to the Resurrection, the Sunday assembly was a standard feature not only of the apostolic age, but also of the centuries which followed. Christians would accept martyrdom rather than forsake common Sunday worship.

*Sunday Celebrations
of the Word and Hours, p. xiv*

work and he shows particular concern for those whose Sunday rest is diminished by the fact that they have no meaningful work to which to return when Sunday rest has come to end.

Furthering this description of Sunday as *dies homini* the late pope speaks of Sunday as a day of solidarity. Sunday rest need not be Sunday inactivity. Our rest should not degenerate into emptiness or boredom. Sunday becomes prophetic when it proclaims not only the primacy of God but also the primacy and dignity of the human person. Thus it becomes truly “the day of humanity.”

A busy family can make their Sunday a day of solidarity and strengthen the family at the same time. Pope John Paul II challenges us to make the Lord’s Day a more intense time of sharing, inviting to a meal people who are alone, visiting the sick, providing food for needy families, spending a few hours in voluntary work and acts of solidarity. Among the *National Bulletin on Liturgy’s* material on this papal letter, Marilyn Sweet offered a reflection on keeping Sunday with the family. It is reprinted below (Vol. 32 – No. 157, pages 101-103) for your further reflection.

SUNDAY MUSINGS OF A WIFE AND MOTHER WITH GROWN CHILDREN

National Bulletin on Liturgy, Vol. 32 – No. 157, pages 101-103. Used with permission.

Marilyn Sweet

Marilyn Sweet holds a Masters in Divinity from the Atlantic School of Theology and works for the Archdiocese of Halifax. She is a wife and mother with grown children.

“For Christian families, the Sunday assembly is one of the most outstanding expressions of their identity and their ‘ministry’ as ‘domestic churches’, when parents shared with their children at the one Table of the Word and of the Bread of life.” (36)

“Sunday is the day of joy in a very special way, indeed the day most suitable for learning how to rejoice and to rediscover the true nature and deep roots of joy. This joy should never be confused with shallow feelings of satisfaction and pleasure, which inebriate the senses and emotions for a brief moment, but then leave the heart unfulfilled and perhaps even embittered.” (57)

If we could do it all over again...

At the very beginning of our marriage we would agree that on Sundays, no matter what, we would be deliberate about honouring God and celebrating God’s blessings to us, expressing our joy and gratitude and sharing those gifts with others. We would build into our family life the rhythms and flavours of the Church year. Even if my partner were not a churchgoer, we would honour this agreement, because faith values will help to build a good strong family that will be filled with love.

The symbols of our faith would be visible in our home in a variety of ways, and we would tell the stories about them just as we told other family stories.

We would create a space for prayer that was welcoming for everyone in the family, and a sign for all who came into our home.

Seasonal elements, objects from nature and things that had personal meaning, as well as the sacred scriptures, would be part of the space, and it would be refreshed every week in preparation for Sunday. We would pray together.

We would accept that on Sunday we run on another kind of time, the prodigal time of the totally gracious Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer. Our Sunday would not just be a “day off work,” but a ‘day in the kingdom’. And we would spend that time in acts of joy and love, in works of praise and charity.

We would make the time before Mass on Sunday an opportunity for the family to prepare together. This might be the only time all week that all family members were all going to be at the same event at the same time, and so it would already be very different from every other day of the week. The mood could be made even better by a common agreement to live peacefully in the family, quickly forgiving the small irritations, skipping just for today those personal habits that annoy others in the family and helping each other to be ready on time. It would help if the basic preparations were completed ahead – set out the Sunday school books, the money for the collection, the food bank contributions, the Sunday clothes, whatever other things were needed. Singing the hymns and psalms or parts of the Mass, or helping children to recite the prayers and to practice blessing themselves – these joyful sounds of Sunday morning would form the family on this day of grace for the domestic church.

There are lots of things we would not do on Sunday morning, because they would take away from this time of family grace. Skip the morning television for parents and for children – fill the house with different sounds of joy and kindness. Save the Sunday paper until later – be open and available to others in the family as everyone prepares for Sunday worship. Don’t let major weekend projects usurp Sunday morning time – give witness to the importance of family value by putting it ahead of everything else. Don’t steal from “kingdom time” for those things that eat up the rest of the week. And save the lectures for another day – make this a “get out of jail free” morning and be as wasteful as God is with your love, affection, encouragement and acceptance.

We would be hospitable to others. We would bring other children to church with us; we would encourage single people to be part of our family in church; we would learn the names of other people and greet them; we would invite people to join us for our family meal afterwards.

We would accept some (but not all!) of the responsibility for the life of the parish on Sunday. We would carry out liturgical, catechetical, and charitable ministries as necessary, and we would build those ministries into our family experience of this day. Service in the Church is part of ordinary Christian life, and children can share in that service from an early age. Everyone can help keep the house of the church tidy; all shared in the work of hospitality; and all lend their voices to the community’s prayer and song. Children are willing testers for catechetical projects and enjoy serving as critic for the lector or musician. Preparing the church for major celebrations fosters a profound appreciation for the concrete physical reality of the feasts and seasons of the Church year.

Prior to the time of the Emperor Constantine, when Sunday was not yet a day of rest, Christians would gather for the breaking of the bread before taking up their daily work.

*Sunday Celebrations
of the Word and Hours*

Dear friends, today's feast celebrates a mystery that is always relevant: God's desire to build a spiritual temple in the world, a community that worships him in spirit and truth. But this observance also reminds us of the importance of the material buildings in which the community gathers to celebrate the praises of God. Every community therefore has the duty to take special care of its own sacred buildings, which are a precious religious and historical patrimony. For this we call upon the intercession of Mary Most Holy, that she help us to become, like her, the "house of God," living temple of his love.

Pope Benedict, *Angelus*,
9 November

And after we all returned from mass, and perhaps Sunday school or other ministry, we would take the time to talk about it all. What did we hear? What did we see? What was exciting, challenging, hopeful? What are the flavours of this season? What was confusing or upsetting? Why did I find it all so boring? How present was I to the celebration, or what did I allow to distract me? What do I experience of God now? How am I changed? What does it all mean for how we live today and the rest of the week? And everyone in the family would be part of the conversation – youngest to oldest – and it is still “get out of jail free” day!

We would tell the stories of our ancestors in faith. We would begin with our own family heroes – how grandparents helped build the church, how everyone prayed for the healing of a sick person, how an uncle has always cared for the poor. And we would tell about the saints and other heroes in our church and in our world – and the decisions they made to be faithful to the vision of the kingdom of God. The people we meet in the scriptures would be part of our storytelling too. We would make pilgrimages to the places where the faith of our family was nourished or expressed – the church where grandparents and parents were baptized and married; the cemeteries with headstones that tell the stories of people's faith and trust in God; the schools and offices where our family members have lived out their commitment to the Gospel.

On Sunday we would talk together about our family life and our individual daily lives, and the ways in which we live out the Gospel. So, the seven-year-old would have a chance to tell about bullies in the schoolyard and the thirteen-year-old could talk about some of the pressure from peers. I could speak of the need to put in extra time at work and how this would keep me away from the family at suppertime. And my husband could tell of the hospital visit he made to our neighbour who is facing terminal illness.

And there would still be lots of time on Sunday to enjoy natures, play sports, visit family and friends, and then get ready for the week. The difference would be that my husband and I would long ago have made a firm decision to begin by keeping Sunday as the Day of the Lord. This decision would surely strengthen and nourish the family, the domestic church.

If we could do it all over again...

THE “DOMINICAL” FEAST OF THE DEDICATION OF ST. JOHN LATERAN BASILICA

Susan K. Roll

Professor, department of Theology, St. Paul University, Ottawa

It's a church. Well okay, a very impressive church with deep historical roots. But its dedication was not mentioned in historical sources before the eleventh century. And more to the point, why does the Feast of the Dedication of the Basilica of St. John Lateran in Rome on November 9th rank as a feast of the Lord, and thus take precedence over the particular Sunday of the Year when November 9th falls on a Sunday? What does it have to do with Christ?

The earliest Christians needed to be somewhat nomadic in their worship space due to the sporadic but deadly threat of government persecution. Only in the third century do we find wall decorations and renovations indicating that a certain house may have served for Christian worship on a permanent basis. Once our ancestors were able to put down spatial roots in particular buildings that could be publically identified as Christian worship space – that is, beginning in the mid-fourth century – they often chose sites previously used for non-Christian worship, a practice their pre-Constantinian forebears would have abhorred. Even today one can find all over Italy examples of churches dedicated to Our Lady built over a temple to Minerva, and called “*Santa Maria sopra Minerva*,” Saint Mary above (or literally, on top of) Minerva. In Rome a small altar to Mithras was found in the excavations below St. Peter’s Basilica, as well as a meeting room for Mithras cult adherents under the church of San Clemente.

The *Hieronymian Martyrology* from the fifth century lists dedication dates for the Roman basilicas of St. Mary Major, St. Michael, St. Peter in Chains and St. Lawrence. The dedication date for the Lateran Hill basilica only appears in the eleventh century. The reason why this date leapfrogged, so to speak, over the others in dignity had to do with the Lateran’s status as the cathedral church of the Bishop of Rome. The Pope lived next to the Lateran Basilica in this period and its dedication date was celebrated with great festivity in Rome, a feast that was made universal in the *Roman Missal* of 1570. The Lateran is thus the seat (*cathedra*) of the patriarch of the Western Church, a sign of unity to Roman Catholic Christians worldwide. In a parallel fashion Catholics in each diocese mark the anniversary of their own cathedral church.

In Jerusalem by contrast Christians had already begun by 335 to commemorate the September 13 anniversary of the dedication of two basilicas, the Martyrium and the Anastasia. The local precedent they followed was the Jewish feast of Hanukkah, the Dedication of the Temple after it had been reclaimed by the Maccabees from Syrian forces in 165 B.C.E.

An interesting and sobering irony is that in 2008 the feast of the Dedication of St. John Lateran fell on the same day as the 60th anniversary of “*Kristallnacht*,” the “Night of Broken Glass.” Beginning on November 9th, 1938, the National Socialist government of Germany launched a carefully engineered campaign of nationwide street riots, burning of synagogues, burning and looting of businesses owned by Jews, and the public abuse, humiliation and deportation of thousands of German Jews. This was the precursor to the Shoah or Holocaust, the attempted genocide of all persons of Jewish ancestry in Europe. And on November 9th the site of struggle centred on their holy places. More than 1,000 synagogues in Germany went up in flames.

Our holy places, our worship spaces, are not merely convenient and appropriate facilities, but points of reference for our own identity in regard to God our Creator. For this reason Catholics mark as a symbol of unity the cathedral of the diocese of Rome, the Basilica of St. John Lateran, conscious of our profound unity with Catholic Christians all across the world and all down through the generations. We, the “living stones” of which the Church is built, carry this spatial

The beauty and harmony of the churches, destined to give praise to God, also draws us human beings, limited and sinful, to convert to form a “cosmos,” a well-ordered structure, in intimate communion with Jesus, who is the true Saint of saints. This happens in a culminating way in the Eucharistic liturgy, in which the *ecclesia*, that is, the community of the baptized, come together in a unified way to listen to the Word of God and nourish themselves with the Body and Blood of Christ. From these two tables the Church of the living stones is built up in truth and charity and is internally formed by the Holy Spirit transforming herself into what she receives, conforming herself more and more to the Lord Jesus Christ. She herself, if she lives in sincere and fraternal unity, in this way becomes the spiritual sacrifice pleasing God.

Pope Benedict XVI, *Angelus*,
Dedication of the Lateran
Basilica, Sunday 9 November

orientation in our collective memory. And in the same way that we pray for the Bishop of Rome and our local bishop in the Eucharistic Prayer, we see here a concrete reminder and sign of our oneness across time and space.

Sources:

- *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, The Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy (1963).
- A.G. Martimort *The Church at Prayer* vol. IV: The Liturgy and Time (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1986)
- François Reckinger, *Gott begegnen in der Zeit. Unser Kirchenjahr* (Paderborn: Bonifatius, 1986)
- *The Liturgical Year: Celebrating the Mystery of Christ and His Saints* (United States Catholic Conference, 1984)
- *Liturgy* vol. 3 nr. 4 (1983), "Holy Places."

STATEMENT ON THE NAME OF GOD

(The following is a slightly adapted version of the message of Bishop Arthur Roche, Chairman of ICEL to the people of the Diocese of Leeds in England).

It is on our keeping holy the Lord's Day that the future of the Church depends rather than on the celebration of the Great Jubilee of the Year 2000. The Jubilee of 2000, Pope John Paul II says at the end of his Letter, will pass, "as we look to other jubilees and other solemn events. As the weekly "solemnity" however, Sunday will continue to shape the time of the Church's pilgrimage, until that Sunday which will know no evening" (n. 87).

Archbishop Marini,
commentary on *Dies Domini*

The Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacrament has issued guidance to Bishops' Conferences on the translation of the 'Name of God' in texts for use in the liturgy. The directives expand on the instruction *Liturgiam Authenticam* and note that the Hebrew-Tetragrammaton YHWH, *Yahweh* or *Jehovah*, has in the tradition of the Church always been translated as 'Lord'. The Bishops' Conference welcomes the attention that the Congregation has given to the due reverence we owe to the name of God. It is also worth noting that the use of *Yahweh* is highly offensive to the Jewish people.

These directives do not affect our current liturgical texts in use at Mass and other liturgies. Nor do they affect the forthcoming translation of *Roman Missal*, 3rd edition, which is being studied and voted on by the bishops, and is being translated following the guidance of the Holy See found in *Liturgiam Authenticam*.

The directive that the name *Yahweh* is not to be read, sung or prayed in the Liturgy or at other times of prayer affects more than the official texts of the liturgy. The name is found in some liturgical songs and parishes are required to refrain from using these texts. Publishers of Catholic liturgical material are asked to either omit or amend any texts that use the term. (In Canada, it should be noted that the *CBW III* followed this protocol when first published, and the name *Yahweh* has been replaced by the word "Lord." *NLO*) Care should be taken when a reading is taken directly from a Bible (such as the Jerusalem Bible) to replace the word *Yahweh* with *Lord* where it occurs. The term should also be avoided in composed texts such as the Prayer of the Faithful.

It is part of our Catholic tradition that we offer reverence not just with the words on our lips but through actions such as a bow of the head. This bow is made whenever the Holy Trinity are named together, for example, in a doxology, and at the names of Jesus, of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and of the Saint in whose honour Mass is being celebrated. Though the document from the Holy See is concerned with language and translation it provides an opportunity to remind ourselves of the reverence owed to the name of God both in worship and in daily life.