



From the Deacon's Desk

Keeping Holy the Sabbath

The tradition of setting aside a day of rest devoted to God reaches back to the earliest days of the Jewish people.

The third commandment says, "*The seventh day is a Sabbath of solemn rest, holy to the Lord*" (Ex 31:15).

The modern understanding of how to keep the Sabbath holy begins with Saint Pope John Paul II's 1998 Apostolic Letter "On Keeping the Lord's Day Holy". He emphasizes that:

- "It is not just Mass attendance, but the entire day. Observance must include spiritual enrichment and opportunities for contemplation and relaxation."

Pope Francis' suggested sabbath activities include: relax, be with families, enjoy themselves, read, listen to music, play a sport.

How can you observe the Sabbath? You might:

- Attend Mass as a family then, once home, discuss the readings and homily.
- Declare a "technology free" day -- all electronics are turned off [One family I met turned off the wi-fi router for the day!].
- Enjoy a work-free day; homework must be done on Saturday -- including work the parents bring home.
- Pray in the home. The rosary is especially appropriate. You can find both traditional and contemporary prayers online.
- Set aside some time for private contemplation and reflection.
- Don't contribute to other's work on the Sabbath; skip the movie theater, grocery shopping, and eating out.
- Plant flowers, a tree, help a neighbor mow her lawn.
- If a child must play Sunday sports, make it a family event; maybe a picnic after the game?
- Volunteer at a soup kitchen, a homeless shelter, or a food bank.
- Enjoy family meals; share preparation and cooking among the family.
- If extended family is close by, invite them to enjoy an afternoon and stay for a meal.
- For distant relatives, write letters or make a card and send them using regular mail. Pick out special stamps.
- Share family stories. Collect and share video histories.