



## Sunday: Day of the Lord

### Sample Homily

#### *We Are the Grain*

Again and again in our the Gospel Jesus uses grain in his parables. The mustard seed, although small, grows to great strength. The weeds may be among the wheat but we wait hopefully for the harvest to be bundled as good grain into God's barn. The seed sown on fertile ground yields sixty to one hundred fold. The farmer in the Gospel of Mark who scatters seed on the land. He then rises night and day in anticipation and the seed eventually sprouts and grows, but he knows not how.

Today in our modern life we are often removed from the daily nurturing and waiting that is required for grain to mature to wheat, yet we still understand the meaning of these parables. Maybe it is because we remember the days when we planted flower seeds in plastic cups in preschool or from our work in our own gardens and lawns. We see that there is a lot of time between when we plant and when we harvest. We can understand then how so much of a grain's potential is reaped through the quiet, restful time between planting and sprouting. This is the way of nature - growth requires rest. New life requires a seeming dormancy, to bear fruit. It's only natural.

We humans are also natural things. In our modern world, we are told from an early age that constant hard work is the key to success and our economy thrives on driving increasing levels of productivity and lowering cost. Our nonstop media is constantly encouraging us to consume more and do more. We now have not only cable channels but streaming networks dedicated to showing us what more we can do to spruce up our homes, organize ourselves, fix our love life, or otherwise improve our lives. (We can even stay up late to read yet another article on the internet about getting more sleep!) With all this external pressure it is easy to see the weekend as a chance to catch up, to complete that long list of other tasks from weeks long gone.

We human beings are natural creatures. Made by God, we too need rest and watchful waiting to see growth from the spiritual seeds God's grace plants in us. Our ancestors who lived closer to the land and to the natural rhythm of life knew this and often kept Sunday as Sabbath. They saw Sunday as a day different from all others. It was a time to relax with family; time to take a slower pace. It was also time to be with the Lord and with his church. Beginning thousands of years ago with the Ten Commandments, we've been urged to keep the Lord's Day holy. God rested on the seventh day of creation, to reflect on what had been created and to affirm its goodness. So should we, his creation.

Early Christians gathered on Sunday for the "breaking of the bread." As the Christian church became the primary faith, Sunday also became the official day of rest. But Sunday isn't only for physical rest, but also for spiritual growth. Just like seeds and toddlers need rest to grow, we all need rest to integrate and balance our busy lives with the truly big picture. Sunday, then, is a chance for us as followers of Christ to bring our reflections and cares to the altar of Lord, and to seek grace to be good disciples in the coming week.

We human beings are also communal creatures. We need the support of families and communities to grow and prosper. When we come together for the sacrifice of the Mass, we reaffirm that it is Christ who is the center of our life, the foundation of our community. When we together offer praise and thanksgiving to God in the Eucharistic liturgy, we are supported and reinforced by our community of believers who share similar struggles and successes.

Although our modern economy undervalues downtime, we only have to look at the natural rhythm of grain, growing patiently in the quiet, to affirm the value of keeping Sunday as a day of the Lord. Keeping holy the sabbath will let the seeds God plants in our busy lives grow, so we may become grain for others and bread for the world.