

## Sunday; *the first day of the week*.

How often it is that we are attuned by the social norms that regulate our lives. When we think about that *first day of the week* as described in today's gospel, more likely than not we would expect that it be Monday and not Sunday. The pattern of the working week has determined that we start with Monday and go through to Friday, with Saturday and Sunday forming the weekend and so in our schedule, Sunday becomes the second day of the weekend and thus the last and not the first day of the week. Now such a mindset has its own consequences because Sunday becomes the day on which everything has to be got ready for Monday and the new week. How different from what the gospel envisages!

What would we think if we made Sunday, (the day of the Lord as the romance languages name it), the first day of the week? How would it affect us? Well let's look for some help by going to the Scripture. Go right back to the beginning and you'll find that on the day following the six days creation we hear how God rested. What a contrast from today's experience, when a day of rest generates strange feelings of guilt because we're not scurrying around making sure that every spare moment is filled with activity. This *rest* is a holy and sacred one which calls on us to focus our thoughts towards things other than the material.

Next let's look at the challenge which the gospel presents us with. It is I think you'd agree a real one. It calls on us to realign the pattern of our week, and thus see the first day of the week as being gathered in and enfolded by the events that every Sunday recalls – the resurrection. The events of Easter Day then shape our thoughts and our actions as we go out into the world of work. The linking of our Sunday worship towards the everyday cycle of our ordinary lives is then made manifest. We receive the peace and the blessing of the Risen Lord, and that becomes the starting point for our week. We are sent on our way with the commission of Jesus: *As the Father sent me so I am sending you*. Having received his body and blood in communion we take the body of Christ out into our world and share it with those we meet and encounter. Yes I know it all sounds beautiful in theory, but in reality the bottom line is making sure we get the kids off to school on time or that I get to the office without too much hassle or that none of the hundred other, as yet unexpected things that can create havoc, happen to me. How do we avoid them? Well the reality is that we can't and we don't and in the person of Thomas I think we find what *Sunday* as the first day of the week is really all about.

As we gather each Sunday, we bring both what has happened to us during the last week, as well as what we hope for the week to come. Our coming to mass each week opens us up to all possibilities. Jesus comes to be amongst us and offers us his hands and his side in which are manifest the wounds of the world. Each of us shares in those wounds through our own faults and disappointments but each one of us shares also in the hope that we are created anew through partaking of his invitation to give him our hands. Let us like Thomas reach out to him and pray that we are restored on this and every Sunday and that we are given the strength of his love and his new life to meet the challenges of the week to come on this *the first day of the week*.