

# Imprimatur

A Publication of St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic Church



## What's Up?

**Sundays - Adult Faith Formation, 5pm, in Church and Parish Hall:**  
3/9 Lessons from the Passion According to the Four Evangelists; no Adult Faith Formation on 3/16 and 3/23. Resumes on March 30th

**Wed/Thurs - Living Your Catholic Faith, 7:30pm (Th) and 9:15am (Wed).**  
3/12-13 Film: *The Passion of the Christ*, by Mel Gibson. There will be no Living Your Catholic Faith meetings on March 19/20 and 26/27. Resumes on April 2/3 with a series on Apologetics: "Claims Every Catholic Should Be Able to Answer"

### Holy Week Schedule:

**Palm Sunday - 3/16**  
Regular mass schedule

**Holy Thursday - Mass of the Lord's Supper at 7pm.**

**Good Friday -**  
Ore Service from 12-3pm (Preaching on the Seven Last Words of Christ and Confessions); 2pm Sung Passion; Stations of the Cross at 3pm; Liturgy of the Passion at 7pm

**Easter - Vigil Mass at 8pm; Easter morning masses at regularly scheduled times.**

## About

*Imprimatur* is Written and Edited by Justin Nickelsen, Assistant for Religious Education, and serves as a medium for Catholic education and opinion

## Catholics in the Public Square

### US Bishops Call On the Laity's Participation in the Election Process

In November of last year the US Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) published *Faithful Citizenship—A Call to Political Responsibility*, a 44 page document outlining our Catholic role in the Public Square. Fortunately, it came with a shorter version, which is available on their website. It was with great joy that I recently read this document and I was struck by its balanced approach in outlining Catholic Social Doctrine.

#### Moral Obligation to Participate

After reminding us that "responsible citizenship is a virtue, and participation in political life is a moral obligation", the bishops return to the traditional starting point of all Catholic social teaching: the dignity of the human person, who is made in the image and likeness of God. "What faith teaches about the dignity of the human person and about the sacredness of every human life", the bishops declare, "helps us see more clearly the same truths that also come to us through the gift of human reason. At the center of these truths is respect for the dignity of the human person. This is the core of Catholic moral and social teaching."

#### Formed Conscience

The Church's role, among many, is to help *form the conscience* of the faithful through an appeal to reason and the natural law, and revelation which comes to us in Scripture and Tradition. With the virtue of prudence and the grace of the Holy Spirit we are empowered to make prudential judgments as how to best participate in a Society that is often far from conformity with the Law that is "written on our hearts" (Romans 2:15, see Wisdom 13:1-9). Thus, these truths do not come through faith alone, but through reason and the natural law, which we tap into through a formed conscience that is employed with prudence and empowered by divine grace of the Holy Spirit.

## Keeping Sunday's Holy Days Beyond the Regulations For You and Your Family

By Sia Eliza Nickelsen

Keeping the Lord's Day "holy" is a Commandment from God (Exodus 20:8-11), a Precept of the Church (*Catechism* 2042), and even shows up in the official "law book" of the Church—the Code of Canon Law (1246-48)! And in case you have forgotten, virtually the exact same commands apply to Holy Days of Obligation. Even if you or other Catholics you know *don't* go to Church on Sunday or other Holy Days, lets assume the following and move on from here: we should at least *know* that it is an integral part of our Faith that on Sundays *and* Holy Days of Obligation we are to attend Mass and we are not to work—legitimate excuses set aside, as well as the issue of knowing that we *should* do something and *choosing* not to.

#### Culture of Holiness

It is difficult to know how to keep the day "holy" in a secular and consumer driven society, which generally does not recognize Sunday as a day set apart from others, so perhaps some of these

**"God wants *all* of us. And it isn't because God *needs* us, but because *we* need *Him!*"**

thoughts can be an aid to you as you establish your own traditions and create your own "culture of holiness".

Christ and His Church do not impose regulations to burden us, nor should they be looked at as ends in themselves: as if simply "going to mass" and "not working" on Sunday is all God wants from us. No, God wants *all* of us. And it isn't because God *needs* us, but because *we* need *Him!*

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## Holy Quotes

"Don't let your sins turn into bad habits!"  
-St. Theresa of Avila

### Set Apart

So, what are some good things to do which go beyond the “rules and regulations”? What are some ways we can keep Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation “sacred”?

Some folks opt to not patronize businesses; others stay home doing quiet activities, etc. I think that in every way possible it is a good idea to teach children in a household that it is a different day from the rest. Of course, Mass itself changes on Sundays. During the week the Mass typically is a shorter, simpler celebration, whereas on Sundays there are often many altar boys, more singing, an organ, incense, etc. These things stand out to children, signifying a “special” day, especially if they are familiar with a weekday mass.

After Mass, when we are back at home, should we simply treat it as another “day off” or should we not do more to cultivate Sundays and other major Feasts of the Church?

### Cultivating Tradition

Here are a few ideas which could help you set these days apart from the rest:

**TV** – Turn it off or at least limit the amount of time you watch it. The average American watches a few hours of TV per day, and according to one study, children watch an average of 1,680 minutes of TV per week! It is no surprise that the decline in both the family and the steep drop in Catholics actively living their Faith correlate with the invention of the television—we only have so much time, and if most of our spare time is spent in front of the TV, then no wonder people “don’t have time” for God and family!

**Music** –Perhaps you might listen to different music on Sundays. Classical music, sacred polyphony, chant, etc. are all excellent choices to compliment the splendor of Sunday!

**Food** – Go the extra mile with food and decoration. The day is special, so signify that with a special tablecloth, a candle, etc.

**Books** – People often say they have “no time to read”. Well, if you are resting on Sundays, don’t you have time then? Scripture and other forms of spiritual reading are particularly appropriate.

**Sweets** – Limit the sweets you have during the week, especially those for children. On Sundays you can celebrate by making it the “sweet day”. The same is true, of course, of Holy Days of Obligation and major Feasts.

**Shopping** – Beyond the fact that shopping and eating-out creates an environment where people have to work, it takes time out of your Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation where you may not be focusing on the purpose of the Day. These are not the days to go to the mall, or get business supplies from Office-Max. We are certainly not too busy that we can’t get these errands done sometime between Monday and Saturday!

### Growing Up in the Faith

Growing up Sundays were the highlight of my week because I knew that I would have time to paint, draw, read for much longer periods of time, write long letters and so much more. On that day, and Holy Days of Obligation and Major Feasts, I didn’t have as many chores as I did throughout the rest of the week. My sister took this day to try new delicious sweet recipes and by midday we frequently could expect to try something wonderful from the oven together over a pot of tea. It was, in general, a day I could expect to spend with my family, have time to play games, go on walks and play music together. And brunch—brunch!—was always something to look forward to: we spread a nice tablecloth, used the good dishes and we looked forward to the never-ending feast, starting with the meal, moving on to jam and toast, then finishing with more cups of tea or coffee, long conversations and extended newspaper reading. I knew many other families who did their own things, who had their own traditions, which I always admired, looked up to and learned from.

### Capturing Significance

Now, being married and off to a good start with my two children, we have our own focuses and are establishing our own traditions to cultivate the Faith and celebrate the Feasts. We sometimes go on a family hike, spend the whole day reading, or simply nurture quiet during the day. If we listen to music we try to limit it to classical music in the afternoons and sacred polyphony in the morning. We light (more) candles than we usually do, and try to “be” together in the presence of God. Pretty much, our traditions try to acknowledge the difference that Sunday and Holy Days of Obligation have from other days throughout the year.

I don’t think that any one way is the right way. Each family has their own charisms, their own traditions, their own

strengths. But we can all learn from one another and keep praying for the blossoming of our own families to take place.

Happy Sunday to you all, and God bless you during the Season of Lent as we wait in anticipation for the greatest Feast of all—The Resurrection of Christ on Easter!

*Sia Nickelsen, member of St. Thomas, writes from Vancouver, WA. This article was adapted from an online magazine focused on the Catholic family and mothering titled Coffee and Diapers, of which Sia is one of three contributing authors. You can find more at www.CoffeeandDiapers.com*



Faithful  
Citizenship

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### The Issues

While issues of abortion, euthanasia, stem-cell research, marriage between a man and a woman, and human cloning are a few of the most important issues—issues that are *intrinsically evil* and could *never* be justified based on circumstance—the bishops remind us that “all the life issues are connected” and we “are not single-issue voters”. Intimately connected to the “issues of life” and the “dignity of the human person” are those of poverty, health care, immigration, the

**“All life issues are connected and we are not single issue voters.”**

environment, worker rights, education, just war theory, the legitimate use of capital punishment, etc. Yes, the Church talks about health care, wages, and a host of other important issues!

### Weight of Issues vs. Totality

Some will say that we can’t treat all issues with the same weight, and they would definitely be *right* to say that. Abortion, for instance, is *always* wrong and the killing of over 40-million unborn children since Roe v. Wade is almost an unintelligible horror. That said, we must come to *appreciate* and *understand* the totality of Church teaching on social issues, even if—when all is said and

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done—the “single issues” possibly trump the others when we are voting. We must appreciate that the Church has something to say about the environment, for example, and our duty to take care of it, not only because it is God’s creation, but because the degradation of the environment has an adverse affect on *dignified human people*.

### Neither Liberal or Conservative

Once we have knowledge of the broader understanding the Church concerning issues of human dignity and life, we quickly will come to realize that “these themes... provide a moral framework that does not easily fit ideologies of ‘right’ or ‘left’, ‘liberal’ or ‘conservative,’ or the platform of any political party. They are not partisan or sectarian, but reflect fundamental ethical principles that are common to all people.” The Church isn’t “Republican” or “Democrat”!



This is an election year of great importance, and we as Catholics have a *moral obligation* to participate in the process and apply Catholic principles to

our decisions through a well formed science and the use of prudential judgment that is empowered by the Holy Spirit.

### Challenging Preconceived Notions

If you are not registered, get registered. If you have never voted, start. If you have long thought that the Church has no right to get involved in your thought process as voters, think again. If you have ignored the totality of the Church’s social teaching for the sake of a “single issue”, join the Pastors of Our Souls and broaden your horizons. If you have been reading your Faith through the secular categories of “liberal and “conservative”, “blue and red”, and “left and right”, stop today and start reading *society* through the lens of your holy and apostolic Catholic Faith!

### Do Your Home Work

You can find the long version and the short version this document at [faithfulcitizenship.org](http://faithfulcitizenship.org). Also, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops website has list documents on individual social justice issues, from the War in Iraq, to capital punishment, to contemporary immigration issues and abortion. Check it out at [USCCB.org](http://USCCB.org).

## Call for Prayer Iraqi Archbishop Kidnapped

Considering that it hasn’t really been covered by the secular media, perhaps you haven’t heard that Paulos Faraj Rahho, Archbishop of Mosul, Iraq, was kidnapped on Friday, January 29th by Islamic militants. After leading the Way of the Cross, the Archbishop and others were driving away when militants stopped their car and opened fire, killing his three aides.

Catholic News Agency, an online news site, reported on Monday, March 3rd that the militants have demanded a 1.8 million dollar ransom.

Pope Benedict has called for all Catholics to pray for the release of the Archbishop, describing the act as “premeditated” and “despicable”.

The situation has conjured up memories of a situation last year on the Feast of Pentecost when militants stopped a Priest and three of his Deacons, insisting that they convert to Islam or die. Refusing, they were all killed while one deacon’s wife looked onward.

Please pray for the situation in Iraq in general, and those Christians who are persecuted and even being killed for their Catholic Faith, and especially pray for the release of Archbishop Raddo.

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## Note For Latin Lovers (And Prospects) “What is that Insert Thing?”

Some of you who are regulars to the 11:30am Sunday Mass—or those of you who may have accidentally slept in—probably noticed the insert in the Latin/English guide for the last many weeks, but didn’t know what it was for.

After hearing many in the Parish express senses of “confusion” regarding the Latin in general, and the larger Latin/English Guide in particular, we decided to add the insert to simplify things for those who might be intimidated by the musical notations of the larger guide.

The simplified version only has the text, Latin (or Greek) on the left, with an

English translation on the right. Now you can use the larger version with the musical notations, or the smaller one without them. Whatever you wish!



So, if you didn’t know what it was for, check it out!

It also comes with some educational commentary at the top of the first page. Since it will soon be changing, I thought I would utilize the *Imprimatur* as an opportunity to get people up to date.

### From the January/February Edition

Vatican II expanded the use of the common language of the people (the “vernacular”) during the Liturgy, yet contrary to popular understanding the use of Latin was to be “preserved” (see Vatican II, *Constitution on the Liturgy*, par. 36). Desiring to be faithful to the directives of Christ’s Church, St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic Parish encourages you to actively participate in the Liturgy by singing the Ordinary of the Mass—those sections that, more or less, are part of the Liturgy every week; parts that we should already know in English. The purpose of this guide is to make these few Latin parts of the Mass easier for you to follow and learn. English is on the left with Latin on the right. Don’t worry; if you try and actively participate, it will soon become second nature!

### Question of the Month

“What do I do at the beginning of Mass and during Communion when the choir is singing? How do I participate if I don’t know those parts in Latin?”

Answer: The parts of the Mass that you are referring to are called *Propers*, as they are “proper” to that specific Mass and change through the Liturgical year. Contrast that with the *Ordinary*, which includes all of those parts in this Guide (The Creed, the Our Father, etc.)—those that are generally part of every Mass. We often think that “participation” requires singing or other actions and gestures. Sometimes the greatest participation that we can offer is in silence, meditating on the Sacred Mysteries around us, which is what we should do at these times with the aid of our beautiful Choir. Close your eyes and praise God!