

# LOOKING THROUGH STAINED GLASS



## A Column by Fr. Tom

### But on the Sabbath He Rested

In this column, we move forward to the Third of the Ten Commandments. As mentioned in a previous column, the first three of the Commandments pertain primarily to our love of God. We have learned that our love for God should be the primary love of our life and that our love should be so deep that we even respect and honor God's Name. In this column, we will learn that our love for God should inspire us to spend time with Him. We call this special time the LORD's Day, or Sabbath. The Jewish people recognize this day as Saturday on the calendar. Because Jesus rose on the morning following the traditional Jewish Sabbath, Christians keep Sunday as the LORD's Day.

In the traditional catechetical formula of the Ten Commandments, the Third Commandment reads, "Remember to keep holy the LORD's Day." As we have done with previous Commandments, we should compare the traditional catechetical formula with the original text in the book of Exodus. In that Scripture, we read, "Remember the sabbath day — keep it holy. Six days you may labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a sabbath of the LORD your God. [...] For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea and all that is in them; but on the seventh day he rested. That is why the LORD has blessed the sabbath day and made it holy." [EX 20:8-10a, 11]

In the above quote, we realize that our remembering to keep holy the LORD's Day (sabbath) is an imitation of the Lord Himself. We rest on the sabbath because the Lord rested on the sabbath. In this column, we are learning to use the Ten Commandments as a measure and an inspiration of holiness. The greatest measure of

holiness is God Himself, so our imitation of God would be a great way to strive toward holiness. In fact, that was one of the oft-repeated tenets of the Jewish faith: "You shall be holy, as I [the Lord] am holy." [LV 11:45, cf. LV 11:44, LV 19:2] Jesus Himself quoted a variation on this same tenet in His Sermon on the Mount, when He says, "So be perfect, just as your heavenly Father is perfect." [MT 5:48]

So what does it mean to keep the LORD's Day holy? First, it means that this day should be different from every other day. As mentioned in the quote from Exodus above, "Six days you may labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a sabbath of the LORD your God." [EX 20: 10a] It should be a day of rest.

As we mentioned at the beginning of this column, it should also be a day when we find time to commune with our God. For this reason, one of the five Precepts of the Church, which we will discuss in future columns, is to attend Mass on this day (as well as holy days of obligation) and to refrain from any unnecessary work on that day. Giving God one day per week recognizes the gift of life that God has given to us. If we use the LORD's Day well, it will help us to appreciate the other days of the week even more. Giving God the first day of the week also recognizes the primacy that our relationship with God should have, as expressed in the First Commandment.

Our love of God shows in the time that we give to God. We grow in holiness when we remember to give God the first fruits of our time, by keeping holy the LORD's Day.

