

## St. Louis Catholic Church

Saturday After Ash Wednesday

How do we please God? In Isaiah's reading today God's message continues from yesterday and tells us that light shines on us when we remove oppression, false accusations and malicious speech. This is the fast He wants and for us to give bread to the hungry and satisfy the afflicted. It reminds us that we belong to the family of God and we are to treat everyone as a brother or sister with respect, and to afford them the dignity of a child a God. Also to be sensitive to their needs.

Through Isaiah, God also says that we shall delight in the Lord if we do as we are commanded by keeping Holy the Sabbath--the Lord's Day. If you do not follow your own pursuits on my holy day, if you call the SABBATH a delight and the Lord's Day honorable and if you honor it by not following your ways, seeking your own interests, then we will be a delight to the Lord.

The old Catechism told us to know, love and serve God and be happy with Him now and in eternity is our highest calling. God is pleased when we honor Him on the Sabbath and we come together as His Family. It is who we are and where we please Him. We come not as saints but sinners to be accepted, fed in word, nurtured by the Bread of Life. We come as a Family because we are redeemed as a Family and we are united in the Family of Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

When I look back on my life, like most of us, I realize that my mother had a lot of wisdom, love and guidance. A mother really knows what is best for us. Sometimes listening and obeying was tough but she wanted me to do what is right.

Holy Mother, the Church, commands us to Keep Holy the Day of the Lord by attending Sunday Mass and Holy Days of Obligation. Too much to demand? Imagine 168 hours in a week and only one where we can be in the presence of God in His Fullness, and be with our family. Too many of us ignore this call to give thanks and praise in the Eucharistic Celebration. There are many ways to praise God for sure, but only in Mass do we abide in His total presence--Body--Blood--Soul and Divinity. Like Isaiah's reading we too often follow our pursuits. We golf, fish, hunt, sleep in, go to children's competitive games. These are all nice, enjoyable endeavors but slowly and surely we become Catholic in name only.

Imagine if your child, spouse, parent or sibling refused to eat with the family except when they felt like it. We wouldn't tolerate it as parents and we would be crushed if it was our parent or spouse. How does God look upon us and how does He feel when we prefer our choices over His Day to be honored? Certainly it doesn't please Him either when those who regularly attend do not take the gift of Christ and become like the food we eat.

In the Gospel Jesus calls Levi (Matthew) from being a tax collector to "Follow Me". Levi used to do what benefitted him. Levi left his post and invited Jesus to a meal and Jesus fed the guests with His words and presence.

Christ was criticized for eating with sinners but He said that He came not for the healthy and righteous but for sinners. The Church is a hospital for the sick and sinful not a museum for saints.

Every Sunday the whole family is called to be together. Called to give thanks to God, to express that as the week begins, it begins in God. We come to acknowledge together that we are sinners; we are fed by the word and given the Bread of Life--the pledge of Eternal Life. We hopefully leave renewed in who we are and in whom we belong.

Please come home if you are away. You are wanted, loved and missed. Let all of us seize that special hour every week and be clothed in the mantle of God's love. Let's remember and make present the greatest gift of all time: God's salvation and our redemption.

God Bless,  
Msgr. John McArthur

Alienated from the Church? Pray, talk, seek guidance. [CatholicsComeHome.org](http://CatholicsComeHome.org) is a good resource.