

this repose today? It is the Eternal King, who through sufferings accomplished salvation, keeping the Sabbath in the grave and offering us a new Sabbath."³⁸⁷ After the Sabbath repose, on the "first day of the week" (see Mk 16:1-2), that is, on Sunday, the Lord shone forth from the tomb. For Christians, this first day became the true Day of the Lord—exceptional and salvific. "Accordingly, the eighth day, which is the first day of the week, represents to us that original life [given before the Fall], not taken away but made eternal."³⁸⁸ The Church celebrates the Day of the Lord's Resurrection by the liturgical "breaking of bread," that is, with the Eucharist, offering the faithful Communion unto life eternal.

558 From early on, the Church honoured Saturday as the holy seventh day of rest, on which we commune with God in a holy manner. Sunday, then, became the eighth day, the day of celebrating Christ's Resurrection. Consequently, to the present day, Saturday and Sunday in the Churches of the Byzantine tradition are always Eucharistic days, even during Great Lent. "Truly, how can you look Sunday in the face, if you do not honour Saturday? Are you aware that these two are sisters, and that if you wrong one, you dishonour the other?"³⁸⁹

a. Sunday

559 the event of the Death and Resurrection of Christ was and remains the foundational theme of the Christian Good News. Christians not only proclaim it; they actually re-present and relive it in the Eucharist. On the one hand, the day of Christ's Resurrection was, of course, a specific day in the history of humankind. However, in its exceptionality it rises above history. this is because human history is a record of the finiteness of creation, whereas Christ's Resurrection overcame the transitory nature of history. therefore, the event of the Resurrection endures, it happens, in the variable and transitory episodes of history. the Church liturgically emphasizes the historical character of the Resurrection by the yearly celebration of Pascha (Easter), whereas the divine permanence of this event in history is manifest in each Sunday's Eucharist. Every Sunday is a commemoration of Pascha, when at the Divine Liturgy the Risen Christ manifests his presence. Sunday is an icon of the glorious second coming. In this way the Resurrection, as the Feast of Feasts, enters a person's entire life; it sanctifies it and transfigures all of it into a feast. Sunday—the Eighth Day—is praised in song through

³⁸⁷ Floral Triodion, Great and Holy Saturday, Matins, Stichera for the Praises.

³⁸⁸ AUGUSTINE OF HIPPO, Letter 55: Replies to Questions of Januarius, 9, 17: PL 33, 212.

³⁸⁹ GREGORY OF NYSSAN, On Chastisement PG 46, 309.

the eight tones (or modes), which successively follow one another each week throughout the year. This weekly cycle in Christianity is Paschal in its foundation, because it is from Pascha that we begin the countdown of the New Creation and its history. This New Creation and its history occur in everyday events and relationships—within the old creation, which is mortal creation.

b. The Other Days of the Week

560 Just as Christian tradition views the daily cycle as an icon of the history of salvation, so also the week is viewed as such an icon. The week has its beginning in the creation of the world and its culmination in the glorious second coming of Christ. Sunday, which is the Eighth Day, the first and unique day of the New Creation, becomes the first day of the week. Sunday as the Eighth Day is a prophetic sign and beginning of the coming "resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come" (Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed). In the remaining six days of the week, from Monday to Saturday, the Church celebrates the fulfilment of God's plan of salvation—from the creation of the world to the achievement of its fullness and completion.

561 Monday is dedicated to the "second day of creation," when God separated the waters within creation and made the firmament—"And God called the firmament heaven" (*Gn 1:8*)—the dwellers of which are the angels. As the angels personify the invisible creation, so humans personify the visible. In fact, humans are the crown of visible creation. Among the human race, however, according to the testimony of Christ, there was none greater than John the Baptist. To him is dedicated Tuesday. The Church dedicates Wednesday to the life-giving Cross of the Lord, remembering how through the "craving for pleasure" the human race was expelled from paradise and the "tree of disobedience" brought death into the world; Christ's "tree of the Cross," on the other hand, renewed life and granted incorruption.³⁹⁰ For the salvation of the world, the Father sends into the world his Son, "born of a woman" (*Gal 4:4*). This is why Wednesday is also dedicated to the most holy Mother of God. The incarnate Son of God establishes his Church on the apostles, whom he sends into the world: "As the Father has sent me, so I send you" (*Jn 20:21*). The pastoral solicitude of the Church for the people is personified by Saint Nicholas the Wonderworker, archbishop of Myra in Lycia. This is why *Thursday* is dedicated to the apostles and Saint Nicholas.

³⁹⁰ See Octoechos, Tone 3, Wednesday, Vespers, Aposticha.