

Pope John Paul II Calls for National Sunday Laws

On May 31, 1998, on the occasion of the Solemnity of Pentecost in St. Peter's Basilica in Rome, Pope John Paul II issued an Apostolic Letter, entitled *Dies Domini* [The Lord's Day], after the two words which open the papal statement.

In this official decree from the Vatican, the pope declared that the nations should enact National Sunday Laws.

On pages 22 to 23 (sections 64 to 67), of the 37-page papal letter, will be found a call for secular governments to enact—and strictly enforce—laws which will guarantee that all their citizens will rest on Sundays, so church worship services can be more easily attended.

Does it mean very much when the pope speaks? Some think it does; others think it does not. The present writer was deeply impressed when, earlier this year, the Vatican obviously made a deal with atheist Castro, the head of Cuba.

It apparently went something like this: Negotiations between the Vatican and Castro crystalized when it was agreed that the pope would come to Cuba and speak for several days to the populace of that nation (the great majority of whom are Roman Catholic). In return, the Vatican would pull strings in Washington, D.C., relaxing trade sanctions and permitting easier access of tourists, with their dollars, into Cuba.

While in Cuba, it was obvious that Castro treated the pope with utmost respect, recognizing what his agents in Washington, D.C. were about to effect. Following the return of the papal entourage to Rome, the U.S. Government began a totally unexpected, apparently unexplainable relaxation of restrictions on Cuba.

Are the words of the pope powerful? Yes, they are. But mark this: The public words of the pope are only the tip of the iceberg; they only indicate the directions in which papal ambassadors and Catho-

lic legislators, in capitals throughout the world, are working for Vatican-guided changes. **It is the careful timing and interaction of the two combined which is so powerful. We are told that one day soon: "And all the world wondered after the beast" (Revelation 13:3). That prediction will come to full fruition when the United States enacts a National Sunday Law, and the other nations follow in its train.**

(However, keep in mind that the actual coercion leading up to this direct enactment in Washington, D.C. will result from a coalition of very active Protestant groups. Roman Catholics will cooperate; but, in America, it will be Protestants which will lead out. See the present writer's *End Time Series* for details. It is the most complete, classified collection of Spirit of Prophecy statements on last-day events—from just before the National Sunday Law, on down to the final destruction of the wicked, and beyond.)

John Paul II, in spite of his present frailness, is known to be a thoughtful writer. Very likely he had others help him flesh out the details of this extensive document. It contains the equivalent of a master's degree dissertation. The last seven and a half pages of this statement consist of 131 footnote references to a variety of Roman Catholic documents, dating back through the Dark Ages to the early centuries.

At the conclusion of this study, we will briefly consider the target date the pope has in mind.

Let us now carefully examine this 37-page statement of the pope. **Ostensibly, it was directed to Roman Catholics; but, nested within it, is a direct call to world governments to enact National Sunday Laws.**

In this analysis, we will note everything of significance. Throughout the document, section numbers were attached, by the Vatican, to some of the paragraphs. There are 87 sections in the statement.

Following an introductory statement, the papal

letter is divided into chapters. There are five of them: *Dies Domini, Dies Christi, Dies Ecclesiae, Dies Hominis, and Dies Dierum*. From time to time, subhead phrases occur.

In our quotations from this document, in one instance we changed a Vatican bracket to a parenthesis, but we have noted where we did it. As a result, all brackets in quotations are ours. The papal document had no italics, so any you find are also ours.

Throughout this study, we have quoted only the most salient and significant points in the letter—and everything dealing with a hint or call for governmental legislation or enforcement.

Within the quotations, we have bold italicized those remarks which could possibly be construed to indicate a call for Sunday observance, legislation, or enforcement.

Because page format can vary, according to where one obtained a copy of this papal statement, quotation references will contain both page and section numbers.

Certain facts should be noted:

1. This is an official statement by the pope of Rome, and should be recognized as such. It deals with a serious topic predicted in Revelation 13 and the book, *Great Controversy*.

2. This papal letter is a declaration by the pope to secular rulers everywhere, that they should enact and enforce National Sunday Laws.

3. Although primarily addressed to Roman Catholic clergy and laymen, advice is also given to governmental leaders.

4. It is a call for laymen to attend church and receive the mass more faithfully.

5. It is a call for the clergy—the priests and the offices of bishops (in official Vatican nomenclature, the term, “bishops,” includes archbishops, cardinals, and other prelates)—to push for stronger public regard for Sunday sacredness. This is to be done through legislation requiring a stoppage of work on Sundays. Active enforcement, including penalties for non-compliance, should be included. We find here, not a request, but a demand.

6. Inferences are made that, in recent years, Catholic clergy have already been attempting to do this.

“If any man have an ear, let him hear.”—*Revelation 13:9*.

Let us now consider this document:

The title and introductory lines of this papal letter are these:

“Apostolic Letter

“Dies Domini

“of the Holy Father John Paul II

“To the Bishops, Clergy and faithful of the
“Catholic Church

“On Keeping the Lord’s Day Holy”

—page 1

The introductory statement (*pages 1-3*) of the Apostolic Letter then begins with these words:

“My esteemed Brothers in the Episcopate and the Priesthood, Dear Brothers and Sisters!”

“The Lord’s Day—as Sunday was called from Apostolic times—has always been accorded special attention in the history of the Church because of its close connection with the very core of the Christian mystery. In fact, in the weekly reckoning of time Sunday recalls the day of Christ’s Resurrection.”—*Page 1, section 1*.

The remainder of this section attempts to provide a Biblical basis for Sunday sacredness (for which, of course, there is none). For this purpose, it cites a couple resurrection day appearances of Christ,—and even declares that Psalm 118:24 is referring to Sunday!

Section 2 continues with this theme, that Sunday is the day of the resurrection.

Here is an example of the wandering tone of some of these passages, with their gorgeous wording, enclosing empty shells.

“It [Sunday] is a wondrous event which is not only absolutely unique in human history, but which lies at the very heart of the mystery of time. In fact, ‘all time belongs to (Christ) and all the ages,’ as the evocative liturgy of the Easter Vigil recalls in preparing the Paschal [Passover] Candle. Therefore, in commemorating the day of Christ’s Resurrection not just once a year but every Sunday, the Church seeks to indicate to every generation the true fulcrum of history, to which the mystery of the world’s origin and its final destiny lead.”—*Page 1, section 2. [(Christ)] was in brackets in the original, above.*

Section 3 touches on the importance of Sunday laws, wherever they already occur. Here are the significant excerpts:

“The fundamental importance of Sunday has been recognized through two thousand years of history and was emphatically restated by the Second Vatican Council.”—*Page 2, section 3*.

“Paul VI emphasized this importance once more when he approved the new General Roman Calendar and the Universal Norms which regulate the ordering of the Liturgical Year.”—*Page 2, section 3. [This occurred near the conclusion of Vatican II, and primarily concerned a revised arrangement for yearly church festivals and*

holy days.]

“The coming of the Third Millennium, which calls believers to reflect upon the course of history in the light of Christ, also **invites them to rediscover with new intensity the meaning of Sunday: its ‘mystery,’ its celebration, its significance for Christian and human life.**”—Page 2, section 3.

“I note with pleasure that **in the years since the [Vatican II] Council this important theme [of strengthening Sunday sacredness] has prompted not only many interventions by you, dear Brother Bishops, as teachers of the faith, but also different pastoral strategies which—with the support of your clergy—you have developed either individually or jointly. On the threshold of the Great Jubilee of the Year 2000, it has been my wish to offer you this Apostolic Letter in order to support your pastoral efforts in this vital area.**”—Page 2, section 3.

“Prompted . . . many interventions by you . . . Bishops.” To “intervene” is to come to another on behalf of someone or something else. The fourth major definition of this word is “to interfere, especially in the affairs of another country” to get something done. Who are the bishops intervening with, on behalf of better Sunday sacredness in their respective territories? This entire papal letter indicates that it is governmental leaders. (The priests, below them, are assigned the care of Catholic laymen.)

Also note, in the above paragraph, a concern to prepare for the “Year 2000” and the “Great Jubilee” the Vatican has planned for that year. More on this later in this study.

“I reflect with you on the meaning of Sunday and underline the reasons for living Sunday as truly ‘the Lord’s Day,’ also **in the changing circumstances of our own times.**”—Page 2, section 3.

Section 4 continues on with this concept of devising “interventions,” to maintain the sacredness of Sunday in nations throughout the world.

Of course, in all this, keep in mind that the Vatican and the bishops have an ulterior motive: Not only does Sundaykeeping exalt the power of Rome, but the more sacredly the people keep that day,—the more likely they are to come to church, hear mass, and pay money into the coffers. It is for this reason that the pope deplores the practice of letting Sunday just be part of “a weekend”—when people do not go to church. They are welcome to gamble, drink beer, and be merry on Sunday, for that is part of the “Sunday rest.” But they need to go to church too. The leaders need their money.

This section begins with a veiled reference to the fact that, in earlier times, Sunday laws were in place to enforce “Sunday rest”—and that they are

not adequately in place now.

“Until quite recently, it was easier in traditionally Christian countries to keep Sunday holy because it was an almost universal practice and because, even in the organization of civil society, Sunday rest was considered a fixed part of the work schedule. Today, however, even in those countries which **give legal sanction** to the festive character of Sunday, changes in socioeconomic conditions have often led to the profound modifications of social behavior and hence of the character of Sunday. The custom of the ‘week-end’ has become more widespread, a weekly period of respite, spent perhaps far from home.”—Page 2, section 4.

“Because of the sociological pressures already noted, and perhaps because the motivation of faith is weak, the percentage of those attending the Sunday liturgy is strikingly low.”—Page 3, section 5.

Section 5 briefly notes that, in some areas of the world, there is very low church attendance on Sunday. (All the more reason to enact Sunday laws!)

Section 6 is only one paragraph in length, and discusses the need for the Church today to “follow in the footsteps of the age-old tradition of the Church.” Those “footsteps” in past ages, including heavy persecution for non-compliance, were not pleasant to behold.

“Given this array of new situations and the questions which they prompt, **it seems more necessary than ever to recover the deep doctrinal foundations underlying the Church’s precept, so that the abiding value of Sunday in the Christian life will be clear to all the faithful. In doing this, we follow in the footsteps of the age-old tradition of the Church,** powerfully restated by the Second Vatican Council in its teaching that on Sunday, ‘Christian believers should come together . . . [to receive the mass, etc.]’”—Page 3, section 6.

Section 7 notes that, as long as attendance at mass occurs, the rest of the day can be spent in “joy and fraternity.”

“The duty to keep Sunday holy, especially by sharing in the Eucharist and by relaxing in a spirit of Christian joy and fraternity, is easily understood if we consider the many different aspects of this day upon which the present Letter will focus our attention.”—Page 3, section 7.

“I would strongly urge everyone to rediscover Sunday.”—Page 3, section 7.

We now come to **Chapter 1, Dies Domini** [The Day of the Lord] (*pages 3 to 7*). The subhead is “The Celebration of the Creator’s Work.” Rather than quoting everything in this lengthy document, we will focus on those items which are of special signifi-

cance. This chapter deals with Sunday in the Old Testament. Oh, you did not know it was there? Read on.

Section 8 discusses, in rambling fashion, the concept that Sunday is a “celebration.” Another favorite word used to describe Sundaykeeping is “festival.” Such talk is not unusual; for the words, “celebration” and “festival,” have been used by the Roman Catholic Church for centuries, to describe how Sunday should be kept. In the mind of the true Catholic, Sunday should be a mingling of worship followed by “joy”; that is, frivolity and, frankly, a little drunkenness. The priests are never bothered by such conduct. It is all part of the Sunday “celebration.” It is a “festival.”

“For the Christian, Sunday is above all an Easter celebration . . . It is the festival of the ‘new creation.’ ”—Page 3, section 8.

This section ends with these words:

“In order to grasp fully the meaning of Sunday, therefore, we must re-read the great story of creation and deepen our understanding of the theology of the ‘Sabbath.’ ”—Page 4, section 8.

Sections 9 through 12 seek to draw lessons from the Creation which could apply to Sundaykeeping. This, of course, is strange since Sunday has nothing to do with the Sabbath rest of Genesis 2:1-3. Yet, from time immemorial, theologians have had a way of rewriting Scripture to suit their own desires.

At one point in this wide-ranging application of many Scriptures to Sundaykeeping, John Paul makes a slanted reference to his declaration a couple years earlier that evolutionary theory was true. (See *Evolution Officially Accepted by the Vatican (WM-818)*)

“The exhilarating advance of science, technology and culture in their various forms—an ever more rapid and today even overwhelming development—is the historical consequence of the mission by which God entrusts to man and woman the task and responsibility of filling the earth and subduing it by means of their work, in the observance of God’s Law.”—Page 5, section 10.

Thus John Paul gives his blessing to modern science and its errors, declaring it the result of obedience to Genesis 1:28 and “God’s Law.”

Later in this same chapter, in section 13, it is noted that obedience to the Ten Commandments is involved, and requires “religious discipline.”

“**The Sabbath precept**, which in the first Covenant prepares for the Sunday of the new and eter-

nal Covenant, **is therefore rooted in the depths of God’s plan**. This is why, unlike many other precepts, **it is set** not within the context of strictly cultic stipulations but **within the Decalogue**, the ‘ten words’ **which represent the very pillars of the moral life** inscribed on the human heart. **In setting this commandment within the context of the basic structure of ethics, Israel and then the Church declare that they consider it not just a matter of community religious discipline but a defining and indelible expression of our relationship with God**, announced and expounded by biblical revelation. **This is the perspective within which Christians need to rediscover this precept today.**”—Pages 5-6, section 13.

The pope is supposedly talking about the Sabbath here, not Sunday; but, by contextual implication, he is actually making Sundaykeeping the heart of the moral code for all mankind! In the previous section, John Paul II linked Sundaykeeping with the Creation of the world; now he connects it to the Ten Commandments. Throughout this papal letter, the various Biblical aspects of the Sabbath are twisted into supports for Sundaykeeping!

Gradually the tone changes from noting the reasons for Sabbathkeeping, and assuming they apply to Sunday as well,—to direct assumptions that Sunday, not the Sabbath, is what the Bible talks about, when it speaks about the “Sabbath” in the Old Testament! Did you know that Sunday is the day of rest in Genesis 2:1-3?

“In the first place, therefore, Sunday is the day of rest because it is the day ‘blessed’ by God and ‘made holy’ by him, set apart from the other days to be, among all of them, ‘the Lord’s Day.’ ”—Page 6, section 14.

In the papal arrangement, Sunday is not merely first and the Bible Sabbath second; Sunday is the only sacred weekly day. All other sacred days in the papal calendar are those feasts enacted by Church decree. Catholicism is the religion of man. Based on man’s theories, it focuses on the worship of man.

The papal statement then returns to the theme that Sunday is meant by “Sabbath” in the Ten Commandments (a wholly illogical argument, since the Decalogue speaks of “the Sabbath,” not “Sunday, and “the seventh day,” not the “first day”).

“ ‘For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day; therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy’ (v. 11). Before decreeing that something be done, the commandment

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urges that something be remembered. It is a call to awaken remembrance of the grand and fundamental work of God which is creation . . .

“This formulation complements the one we have already seen; and taken together, the two reveal the meaning of ‘the Lord’s Day’ within a single theology vision which fuses creation and salvation. Therefore, the main point of the precept is not just any kind of interruption of work, but the celebration of the marvels which God has wrought.”—*Pages 6-7, section 16.*

Thus creation, the Ten Commandments, the weekly rest, and celebration are linked to Sunday.

Chapter 2: **Dies Christi** [The Day of Christ] (*pages 7 to 11*). The subhead is “The Day of the Risen Lord and of the Gift of the Holy Spirit.”

This chapter concerns itself with Sunday in the New Testament, and opens with a subtle admission of the fact that Sunday worship did not begin until after Christ rose from the dead.

“We celebrate Sunday because of the venerable Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, and we do so not only at Easter but also at the turning of the week’; so wrote Pope Innocent I at the beginning of the fifth century, **testifying to an already well established practice which had evolved from the early years after the Lord’s Resurrection.**”—*Page 7, section 19.*

Little wonder that the pope likes evolution; it is stated here that Sundaykeeping evolved by itself, after a Biblical event. The pope then goes to declare that both the Roman Catholic and Greek Orthodox Churches strongly hold to Sundaykeeping.

“The intimate bond between Sunday and the Resurrection of the Lord is strongly emphasized by all the Churches of East and West.”—*Page 8, section 19.*

That may be true today, but he conveniently omits the fact that, in the year A.D. 1054, the Great

Schism between the Western and Eastern Churches occurred because the pope sent an emissary, demanding the rejection of Sabbathkeeping and the sole keeping holy of Sunday. The letter from the pope was rejected—and that was how the Eastern Church (today called the Greek Orthodox) initially split off from loyalty to Rome.

The letter of John Paul II then tries to support the validity of Sunday sacredness by the fact that Christ rose from the dead on that day, and that Sunday is like a weekly “Easter.”

“Although the Lord’s Day is rooted in the very work of creation and even more in the mystery of the biblical “rest” of God, it is nonetheless to the Resurrection of Christ that we must look in order to understand fully the Lord’s Day. This is what the Christian Sunday does, leading the faithful each week to ponder and live the event of Easter, true source of the world’s salvation.”—*Page 8, section 19.*

It is an intriguing fact that the very first attempt, by the local bishop of Rome (in later centuries referred to as “Pope” Victor, although no one recognized him as a “pope” at the time), to enforce Sunday sacredness on the other local Christian churches—was his demand of A.D. 195. It was the “Easter Controversy:” his demand that all the churches observe the annual resurrection commemorative service on a certain Sunday, in the Spring, instead of on the day of the annual Jewish Passover.

(For detailed information about such matters, see Part One of the present writer’s missionary book, *Mark of the Beast*. It is full of Catholic, Protestant, and historical quotations about a variety of topics dealing with the change of the Sabbath, the beast power, and plans for eventual takeover.)

After noting the few New Testament passages which mention Christ’s appearance on the first day of the week, the Vatican letter then continues on with a mention of the few other “first day” verses.

And, of course, the foolish claim is once again

made that Revelation 1:10 mentions Sunday or the first day of the week:

“The Book of Revelation gives evidence of the practice of calling the first day of the week ‘the Lord’s Day’ (1:10). This would now be the characteristic distinguishing Christians from the world around them.”—*Page 8, section 21.*

A fallacious argument is then brought forward, which is not supported by historians: the concept that, while the early Christians kept Sunday holy, the Greeks and Romans around them kept other days holy!

“In those early Christian times, the weekly rhythm of days was generally not part of life in the regions where the Gospel spread, and the festive days of the Greek and Roman calendars did not coincide with the Christian Sunday. For Christians, therefore, it was very difficult to observe the Lord’s Day on a set day each week.”—*Page 8, section 22.*

This is totally false on several counts:

First, the “weekly rhythm of days” (the weekly cycle) was observed uniformly by everyone.

Second, by the time that the paganized Christians were keeping Sunday,—they were doing it because their heathen neighbors were also keeping it sacred.

Third, a majority of the early Christians—all the way up, at least, to the beginning of the fifth century—were keeping the Bible Sabbath. By that time, only at Alexandria, Egypt, and at Rome were a majority of the local Christians keeping Sunday. We have this from two reliable fifth-century church historians, Sozomen and Socrates Scholasticus.

They explain that, a hundred years after the time of Constantine I, most Christians were still keeping the Bible Sabbath, and gradually also keeping Sunday too. But only at two cities was the Sabbath no longer observed.

“Although almost all churches throughout the world celebrate the sacred mysteries on the Sabbath every week, yet the Christians of Alexandria and at Rome, on account of some ancient tradition, have ceased to do this.”—*Socrates Scholasticus, Ecclesiastical History, Book 5, chap. 22.*

“The people of Constantinople, and almost everywhere, assemble together on the Sabbath, as well as on the first day of the week, which custom is never observed at Rome or at Alexandria.”—*Sozomen, Ecclesiastical History, vii, 19, in A Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, 2nd series, Vol. II, p. 390.*

Fourth, the most dynamic pagan religion of the early Christian centuries, in the Roman Empire, was Mithrism. It gradually acquired more adherents than any other heathen cult. The worshipers of

Mithras kept the “venerable day of the sun [god]” holy. That day was Sunday.

The effort to rewrite history and make it appear that God’s people were keeping Sunday sacred, before commanded to do so by Rome, is a cunning lie, in order to attempt to disconnect Sunday sacredness from the embarrassing fact that this child of the papacy was inherited directly from paganism—and from no other source. Sundaykeeping does not exist today because Christ rose from the dead on the first day of the week! Far from it!

The above statement by the pope even goes so far as to imply, at the most, that the pagan world kept a different weekly cycle; or, at the least, that no pagans kept any one day in seven holy to other gods. We know that is false too.

“Yet fidelity to the weekly rhythm became the norm [among Christians], since it was based upon the New Testament and was tied to Old Testament revelation.”—*Page 8, section 22.*

Only Catholics kept the seven-day weekly cycle! Read pages 157-170 in the present author’s book, *Beyond Pitcairn*, for abundant refutation of this. The weekly cycle is found everywhere in the world, and goes back to the foundations of history, and beyond. The entire book, *Beyond Pitcairn*, covers Sabbath issues in great detail—and is an excellent book to share with those not of our faith.

Earlier in this papal letter, when discussing Old Testament times, the attempt was repeatedly made to give Sunday the sanctity which the Creation event and the Ten Commandments bequeathed to the Bible Sabbath.

But now, when considering early church history (after the time of Christ),—a remarkable change occurs! This papal document tries to separate Sunday from “the old Law” and the “Jewish Sabbath” and the “rest” imparted by the Bible Sabbath. A total switch occurs!

Read this:

“Some communities observed the Sabbath while also celebrating Sunday. Soon, however, the two days began to be distinguished ever more clearly, in reaction chiefly to the insistence of those Christians whose origins in Judaism made them inclined to maintain the obligation of the old Law . . . The distinction of Sunday from the Jewish Sabbath grew ever stronger in the mind of the Church, even though there have been times in history when, because the obligation of Sunday rest was so emphasized, the Lord’s Day tended to become more like the Sabbath.”—*Page 9, section 23.*

By a verbal sleight-of-hand, the glorious Sabbath rest, which John Paul praised in the Old Testament, is now transformed into something to be

detested, shunned, a legalistic curse on mankind.

Three other worn-out arguments are then brought forth: (1) Since Jesus rose on the first day of the week, and the first day of Creation Week was the creation of light, therefore this detail has great theological significance—proving that Sunday must be kept holy. (2) Since Christ is called “the first born” in Colossians 1:15 and 18, this also proves it. (3) Sunday is not only the first day of the week, but it is also the eighth day of the week. This fact, in the Catholic mind, must surely hold some mysterious, deep theological truth.

“Sunday is not only the first day, it is also ‘the eighth day,’ set within the sevenfold succession of days in a unique and transcendent position which evokes not only the beginning of time but also the its end in ‘the age to come.’”—Page 9, section 26.

Having earlier reputed any connection between Sunday sacredness and contemporary paganism in the early centuries, the papal letter now admits it—in order to advance the argument that there was a need to borrow from, and capitalize, on pagan practices:

“Wise pastoral intuition suggested to the Church the christianization of the notion of Sunday as ‘the day of the sun,’ which was the Roman name for the day and which is retained in some modern languages. This was in order to draw the faithful away from the seduction of cults which worshipped the sun, and to direct the celebration of the day to Christ.”—Page 10, section 27.

“Wise pastoral intuition,” it is called. At the time, it was an anxious concern, by the Alexandrian and Roman bishops, to ape the heathen customs around them, in order to “be like the other nations” and draw more worldlings into the church. Today those leaders would be called “church growth experts.” Back then, they adopted the Sun Day, the tonsure, holy water, the sign of the cross, mother and child worship, and a variety of other heathen customs. (We have discussed this and more in our books, *Mark of the Beast* and *Beyond Pitcairn*.)

“Writing to the pagans, Saint Justin uses the language of the time to note that Christians gather together ‘on the day named after the sun,’ but for believers the expression had already assumed a new meaning which was unmistakably rooted in the Gospel. Christ is the light of the world.”—Page 10, section 27.

The remainder of the above, quoted, paragraph refers to several allusions to Christ as the light, supposedly proving that Sunday must be sacred, since it was originally the pagan day of the sun.

The very next paragraph declares that, since fire

is a type of light, Sunday is also the day of the Holy Spirit.

“Sunday, the day of light, could also be called the day of ‘fire,’ in reference to the Holy Spirit. The light of Christ is intimately linked to the ‘fire’ of the Spirit, and the two images together reveal the meaning of the Christian Sunday.”—Page 10, section 28.

We have here just a lot of talk, logic, metaphors, and tenuous reasoning. Fluff without substance. Thinking becomes foggy when, for years, it has been based on human suppositions instead of Scriptural facts.

The next paragraph calls Sunday the “day of faith.” We would agree with that; it takes a lot of faith in priests and councils to believe that Sunday is anything more than a common working day.

And then we come to this paragraph, of which the most significant portion will be quoted:

“It is clear then why, even in our own difficult times, the identity of this day must be protected and above all must be lived in all its depth. An Eastern writer of the beginning of the third century recounts that as early as then the faithful in every region were keeping Sunday holy on a regular basis.”—Page 11, section 30.

The reference at the back of the papal letter, lists this “Eastern writer” as being Bardesanes, in his *“Dialogue on Destiny.”* It is questionable whether such a person ever existed; that which he is supposed to have said simply does not agree with contemporary and later historians. You surely will not find that name in any standard church history book.

We are told, by an inspired writer, that very many forged documents were, in later centuries, prepared and attributed to earlier times. It is not true that, by the third century A.D., “the faithful in every region were keeping Sunday holy”!

“About the close of the eighth century, papists put forth the claim that in the first ages of the church the bishops of Rome had possessed the same spiritual power which they now assumed. To establish this claim, some means must be employed to give it a show of authority; and this was readily suggested by the father of lies. Ancient writings were forged by monks. Decrees of councils before unheard of were discovered, establishing the universal supremacy of the pope from the earliest times. And a church that had rejected the truth greedily accepted these deceptions.”—*Great Controversy*, 56.

Not only did the papal power manufacture records, purportedly from earlier centuries, they at the same time obliterated records of dissenters.

“The history of God’s people during the ages of darkness that followed upon Rome’s supremacy is written in heaven, but they have little place in

human records. Few traces of their existence can be found, except in the accusations of their persecutors. It was the policy of Rome to obliterate every trace of dissent from her doctrines or decrees. Every heretical, whether persons or writings, she sought to destroy. Expressions of doubt, or questions as to the authority of papal dogmas, were enough to forfeit the life of rich or poor, high or low. Rome endeavored also to destroy every record of her cruelty toward dissenters. Papal councils decreed that books and writings containing such records should be committed to the flames. Before the invention of printing, books were few in number, and in a form not favorable for preservation; therefore there was little to prevent the Romans from carrying out their purpose.”—*Great Controversy*, 61-62.

We will now continue with the papal letter, at that point where we left off:

“What began as a spontaneous practice later became a juridically sanctioned norm [i.e., National Sunday laws were enacted and enforced]. **The Lord’s Day has structured the history of the Church through two thousand years: how could we think that it will not continue to shape her future?**”—Page 11, section 30.

In other words, the Church will, in the future, continue to try to obtain enforced consent to Sunday sacredness.

“Given its many meanings and aspects, and its link to the very foundations of the faith, **the celebration of the Christian Sunday remains, on the threshold of the Third Millennium, an indispensable element of our Christian identity.**”—Page 11, section 30.

At the end of this letter, John Paul will once again return to this theme of obtaining changes before the turn of the century.

Now we begin Chapter 3, **Dies Ecclesiae** [The Day of the Church] (pages 7 to 20). The subhead is “The Eucharistic Assembly: Heart of Sunday.” This is the longest chapter in the 37-page document and concerns itself with the need for the people to go to church on Sunday and receive the mass. However, buried in the middle of this chapter is the first part of a bombshell.

Here are the sixteen subheads in this chapter: The Presence of the Risen Lord / The Eucharistic Assembly / The Sunday Eucharist [Mass] / The Day of the Church / A Pilgrim People / The Day of Hope / The Table of the Word / The Table of the Body of Christ / Easter Banquet and Fraternal Gathering /

From Mass to “Mission” / The Sunday Obligation / A Joyful Celebration in Song / A Celebration Involving All / Other Moments of the Christian Sunday / Sunday Assemblies without a Priest / Radio and Television.

Reading them over, you can see that the intent of this chapter is to get Catholics back to church on Sunday. Keep in mind that, with so many nominal Roman Catholics not attending church—the coffers of the Church are not replenished to the satisfaction of the priests and bishops. The Church’s money bags are shrinking! It is for such reasons (and not merely the spiritual nourishment of the faithful) that the Church teaches:

“The Catechism of the Catholic Church teaches that ‘the Sunday celebration of the Lord’s Day and his [Christ’s] Eucharist is at the heart of the Church’s life.’”—Page 12, section 32.

Here are the few quotations from this chapter which we would consider significant:

Our people frequently wonder why our own new theologians like the word “community” so much. It is defined by the Vatican as the members of the Catholic Church. The following quotation is but one of many examples in this papal letter:

“Each community, gathering all its members for the ‘breaking of the bread,’ becomes the place where the mystery of the Church is concretely made present. In celebrating the Eucharist, the community opens itself to the communion with the universal Church, imploring the Father to ‘remember the Church throughout the world’ and make her grow in the unity of all the faithful with the Pope and with the Pastors of the particular Churches, until love is brought to perfection.”—Page 12, section 34.

At this point in the chapter, the enforcement of Sunday observance is introduced. It will be discussed more fully later in the papal letter.

“Even if in the earliest times it was not judged necessary to be prescriptive, the Church has not ceased to confirm this obligation of conscience [the urgency of requiring obedience to it], which rises from the inner need felt so strongly by Christians of the first centuries. **It was only later, faced with the half-heartedness or negligence of some, that the Church had to make explicit the duty to attend Sunday Mass; more often than not, this was done in the form of exhortation, but at times the Church had to resort to specific canonical precepts . . .** These decrees of local Councils led to a universal prac-

Pope John Paul II Calls for National Sunday Laws

Continued from the preceding tract in this series

tice, the obligatory character of which was taken as something quite normal.”—Page 17, section 47.

The italicized portion above reveals the voice of the dragon. This papal letter deftly sidesteps the fact that the Church did more than issue “canonical precepts”; it got the State to enforce its decrees. Indeed, for centuries, it was the State enforcing the decrees!

“The Code of Canon Law of 1917 for the first time gathered this tradition into a universal law. **The present Code reiterates this, saying that ‘on Sundays and the other holy days of obligation the faithful are bound to attend Mass.’ This legislation has normally been understood as entailing a grave obligation:** This is the teaching of the Catechism of the Catholic Church, and it is easy to understand why if we keep in mind how vital Sunday is for the Christian life.”—Page 17, section 47.

It is the responsibility of the offices of the bishops (and archbishops, which, in official statements are included in the word “bishops”) to arrange for the enforcement of Sunday sacredness in their regions.

“It is the special responsibility of the Bishops, therefore, ‘to ensure that Sunday is appreciated by all the faithful, kept holy and celebrated as truly the ‘Lord’s Day.’ ”—Pages 17-18, section 48.

Chapter 4, **Dies Hominis** [The Day of Man] (pages 20 to 25). The subhead is “Sunday: Day of Joy, Rest and Solidarity.”

The first part of this chapter concerns itself with how to “celebrate” the Sun Day with rest and recreation. We will note a couple of interesting passages, before passing directly to the most explosive portion of the papal letter:

“More than a ‘replacement’ for the Sabbath, therefore, Sunday is its fulfillment, and in a certain sense its extension and full expression in the

ordered unfolding of the history of salvation, which reaches its culmination in Christ.”—Page 21, section 59.

“It is the duty of Christians therefore to remember that, although the practices of the Jewish Sabbath are gone, surpassed as they are by the ‘fulfillment’ which Sunday brings, the underlying reasons for keeping ‘the Lord’s Day’ holy—inscribed solemnly in the Ten Commandments—remain valid, though they need to be reinterpreted in the light of the theology and spirituality of Sunday.”—Pages 21-22, section 62.

Then, suddenly, we come to a section which refers directly to the need for strong governmental legislation and enforcement, and active efforts by the offices of Catholic Church leaders to see that it is done everywhere. Here is how these astonishing paragraphs (sections 64 through 67) begin:

“For several centuries, Christians observed Sunday simply as a day of worship, without being able to give it the specific meaning of the Sabbath rest. **Only in the fourth century did the civil law of the Roman Empire recognize the weekly recurrence, determining that on ‘the day of the sun’ the judges, the people of the cities and various trade corporations would not work. Christians rejoiced to see thus removed the obstacles which until then had sometimes made observance of the Lord’s Day heroic [difficult]. They could now devote themselves to prayer in common without hindrance.**

“It would therefore be wrong to see in this legislation of the rhythm of the week a mere historical circumstance with no special significance for the Church and which she could simply set aside. Even after the fall of the Empire, the Councils did not cease to insist upon the arrangements regarding Sunday rest. In countries where Christians are in the minority and where the festive days of the calendar do not coincide with Sunday, it is still Sunday which remains the Lord’s Day, the day on which the faith-

ful come together for the Eucharistic assembly. But this involves real sacrifices. For Christians it is not normal that Sunday, the day of joyful celebration, should not also be a day of rest, and it is difficult for them to keep Sunday holy if they do not have enough free time.

“By contrast **the link between the Lord’s Day and the day of rest in civil society has a meaning and importance which go beyond the distinctly Christian point of view.** [The Sunday rest is needed by everyone.] **The alternation between work and rest, built into human nature, is willed by God Himself,** as appears in the creation story in the Book of Genesis (cf. 2:2-3; Ex. 20:8-11): rest is something ‘sacred,’ because it is man’s way of withdrawing from the sometimes excessive demanding cycle of earthly tasks in order to review his awareness that everything is the work of God.”—Page 22, sections 64-65.

Reading through the above passage carefully, you will note these points: (1) Not until the civil law in the fourth century [Constantine’s Sunday Law of A.D. 321] could the Christians properly keep the Sunday holy. (2) This was because, properly so, everyone else—the non-Christians—were also required to keep it holy. (3) Such ancient legislation was not wrong, and its significance should not be ignored today, when there are so many problems for Catholics trying to keep the Sunday holy. (4) Even after the passing of the Roman Empire, the Church tried to maintain these Sunday Laws. (5) Such laws are needed today because of the need for all people, including non-Christians, to not work one day a week.

The next paragraph in the papal letter adds this bold declaration:

“Finally, it should not be forgotten that **even in our own day** work is very oppressive for many people, either because of miserable working conditions and long hours—especially in the poorer regions of the world—or because of the persistence in economically more developed societies of too many cases of injustice and exploitation of man by man. [Everyone needs to stop work once a week.] **When through the centuries, she has made laws concerning Sunday rest, the Church has had in mind above all the work of servants and workers,** certainly not because this work was any less worthy when compared to the spiritual requirements of Sunday observance, but rather because it needed **greater regulation to lighten its burden and thus enable everyone to keep the Lord’s Day holy.** In this matter, my predecessor Pope Leo XIII in his Encyclical *Rerum Novarum* spoke of **Sunday rest as a worker’s right which the State must guarantee.**”—Page 23, section 66.

Among other things, the above paragraph says

this: (1) Even in our own day, many people work too hard and need a rest. (2) This is one of the reasons why, down through the centuries, the Church has required Sunday Law enforcement; spiritual benefits were not the only reason. (3) It is only when Sunday sacredness is guarded by “greater regulation” that the burdens of mankind are lightened, and people can better keep the Sun Day. (4) Pope Leo XIII declared that freedom from work on the Sun Day was the worker’s right, and national governments must guarantee it.

(The reference for Leo XIII’s encyclical is as follows: *Pope Leo XIII, Encyclical Letter, Rerum Ovarum, dated May 15, 1891, recorded in Acta Leonis XIII [Acts of Leo XIII], 11 (1891), pp. 127-128.*)

The next paragraph in the papal letter is also significant:

“In our own historical context there remains the obligation to ensure that everyone can enjoy the freedom, rest and relaxation which human dignity requires, together with the associated religious, family, cultural and interpersonal needs which are difficult to meet if there is no guarantee of at least one day of the week on which people can both rest and celebrate. Naturally, **this right of workers to rest** presupposes their right to work and, as we reflect on the question of the Christian understanding of Sunday, we cannot but recall with a deep sense of solidarity the hardship of countless men and women who, because of the lack of jobs, are forced to remain inactive on workdays as well.”—Page 23, section 66.

Here is yet another significant paragraph:

“Therefore, also **in the particular circumstances of our own time, Christians will naturally strive to ensure that civil legislation respects their duty to keep Sunday holy.** In any case, they are obliged in conscience to arrange their Sunday rest in a way which allows them to take part in the Eucharist, refraining from work and activities which are incompatible with the sanctification of the Lord’s Day, with its characteristic joy and necessary rest for spirit and body.”—Page 23, section 67.

We have, in the above paragraphs, a clear call from the pope of Rome for governmental bodies throughout the world to enact—and strongly enforce—National Sunday Laws! The call—nay, demand—is clearly here.

The remainder of this chapter primarily focuses on the need for the wealthy to share their abundance with the poor.

We now come to the final, and very brief, chap-

ter in the papal letter: **Chapter 5, Dies Dierum** [The Day of Time] (*pages 25 to 27*). The subhead is “Sunday: the Primordial Feast, Revealing the Meaning of Time.”

This chapter, dealing with the concept that Christ is in charge of all kinds of time, especially Sun Day time, tries to link the crucifixion, resurrection, Easter, Pentecost, love for Mary, end of the world, etc., with this pagan holiday.

The portion identified as the **Conclusion** (*pages 27 to 29*) consists of a final call to the faithful to keep the Sun Day holy.

“I entrust this Apostolic Letter to the intercession of the Blessed Virgin, that it may be received and put into practice by the Christian community.”—*Page 28, section 86.*

John Paul’s last five paragraphs are concerned with the need for the bishops and priests to arouse the people to action, in preparation for the year 2000 and the Great Jubilee to be observed that year, that the people are properly keeping the Sun Day. Here are the concluding paragraphs of this papal letter (plus a couple added comments):

“Dear Brothers and Sisters, ***the imminence of the Jubilee invites us to a deeper spiritual and pastoral commitment. Indeed, this is its true purpose. In the Jubilee year, much will be done to give it the particular stamp demanded by the end of the second Millennium*** and the beginning of the Third since the Incarnation of the Word of God. But this year and this special time will pass, as we look to other jubilees and other solemn events. As the weekly ‘solemnity,’ however, ***Sunday will continue to shape the time of the Church’s pilgrimage***, until that Sunday which will know no evening.”—*Page 29, section 87.*

It appears that the focal point of the campaigning for Sunday Laws will be the Year 2000. The “true purpose” of the Jubilee year is to bring all men closer to the fold.

“Therefore, ***dear Brother Bishops and Priests, I urge you to work tirelessly*** with the faithful to ensure that the value of this sacred day is understood and lived ever more deeply. ***This will bear rich fruit in Christian communities, and will not fail to have a positive influence on civil society as a whole.***

“Work tirelessly . . . to ensure that . . . this sacred day is understood and lived ever more deeply.”

“In coming to know the Church, which every Sunday joyfully celebrates the mystery from which she draws her life, may the men and women of the Third Millennium come to know the Risen Christ. And constantly renewed by the weekly commemoration of Easter, may Christ’s disciples be ever more credible in proclaiming the Gospel of salvation and ever

more effective in building the civilization of love.

“My blessing to you all!

“From the Vatican, on 31 May, the Solemnity of Pentecost, in the year 1998, the twentieth of my Pontificate.”—*Page 29, section 87.*

The remaining pages of this 37-page document consist of 131 reference sources, many of them without any date of origin.

THE POPE’S MESSAGE ABOUT SUNDAY LAWS - IN HIS OWN WORDS

Did we read something into the papal letter, which is not there? Not at all; this matter is so important that we have placed the heart of the papal letter together. It is clear that the objective of the entire letter is threefold: (1) The laymen should attend mass on Sunday. (2) The offices of the bishops and archbishops should work toward the objective of getting National Sunday Laws enacted throughout the world. (Whether or not they succeed is another question. If they do not, it will not be for lack of trying.) (3) The governments of the world are summarily told that they should get moving in this direction. The Pope of Rome has spoken. (4) The pope expects from them not merely legislation, but strict enforcement. Penalties should be applied, when necessary.

—Here is the heart of this papal edict—read it for yourself:

AS WE PREPARE FOR THE THIRD MILLENNIUM, LET US RECALL TO MIND THE IMPORTANCE OF THE SUN DAY. I WANT TO ENCOURAGE THE EFFORTS OF THE BISHOPS IN PROMOTING IT.

“The Lord’s Day—as **Sunday** was called from Apostolic times—**has always been accorded special attention in the history of the Church.**”—*Page 1, section 1.*

“**The fundamental importance of Sunday has been recognized through two thousand years of history and was emphatically restated by the Second Vatican Council.**”—*Page 2, section 3.*

“**The coming of the Third Millennium, which calls believers to reflect upon the course of history in the light of Christ, also invites them to rediscover with new intensity the meaning of Sunday: its ‘mystery,’ its celebration, its significance for Christian and human life.**”—*Page 2, section 3.*

“I note with pleasure that **in the years since the [Vatican II] Council this important theme [of**

strengthening Sunday sacredness] has prompted not only many interventions by you, dear Brother Bishops, as teachers of the faith, but also different pastoral strategies which—with the support of your clergy—you have developed either individually or jointly. On the threshold of the Great Jubilee of the Year 2000, it has been my wish to offer you this Apostolic Letter in order to support your pastoral efforts in this vital area.”—Page 2, section 3.

“I reflect with you on the meaning of Sunday and underline the reasons for living Sunday as truly ‘the Lord’s Day,’ also in the changing circumstances of our own times.”—Page 2, section 3.

WE MUST RETURN TO THE PATTERNS OF THE PAST: SUNDAY ENFORCEMENT IS AGAIN NEEDED.

“Until quite recently, it was easier in traditionally Christian countries to keep Sunday holy because it was an almost universal practice and because, even in the organization of civil society, Sunday rest was considered a fixed part of the work schedule. Today, however, even in those countries which give legal sanction to the festive character of Sunday, changes in socioeconomic conditions have often led to the profound modifications of social behavior and hence of the character of Sunday. The custom of the ‘weekend’ has become more widespread, a weekly period of respite, spent perhaps far from home.”—Page 2, section 4.

“Given this array of new situations and the questions which they prompt, it seems more necessary than ever to recover the deep doctrinal foundations underlying the Church’s precept, so that the abiding value of Sunday in the Christian life will be clear to all the faithful. In doing this, we follow in the footsteps of the age-old tradition of the Church, powerfully restated by the Second Vatican Council in its teaching that on Sunday, ‘Christian believers should come together . . . [to receive the mass, etc.]’ ”—Page 3, section 6.

KEEPING SUNDAY HOLY IS A MORAL DUTY.

“The duty to keep Sunday holy, especially by sharing in the Eucharist and by relaxing in a spirit of Christian joy and fraternity, is easily understood if we consider the many different aspects of this day upon which the present Letter will focus our attention.”—Page 3, section 7.

“I would strongly urge everyone to rediscover Sunday.”—Page 3, section 7.

“The Sabbath precept, which in the first Covenant prepares for the Sunday of the new and eter-

nal Covenant, is therefore rooted in the depths of God’s plan. This is why, unlike many other precepts, it is set not within the context of strictly cultic stipulations but within the Decalogue, the ‘ten words’ which represent the very pillars of the moral life inscribed on the human heart. In setting this commandment within the context of the basic structure of ethics, Israel and then the Church declare that they consider it not just a matter of community religious discipline but a defining and indelible expression of our relationship with God, announced and expounded by biblical revelation. This is the perspective within which Christians need to rediscover this precept today.”—Pages 5-6, section 13.

“Wise pastoral intuition suggested to the Church the christianization of the notion of Sunday as ‘the day of the sun’ which was the Roman name for the day and which is retained in some modern languages. This was in order to draw the faithful away from the seduction of cults which worshipped the sun, and to direct the celebration of the day to Christ.”—Page 10, section 27.

“It is clear then why, even in our own difficult times, the identity of this day must be protected and above all must be lived in all its depth.”—Page 11, section 30.

IN FORMER TIMES, SUNDAY OBSERVANCE WAS REQUIRED BY LAW. WE NEED TO RETURN TO THAT PRACTICE AS WE FACE INTO THE THIRD MILLENNIUM.

“What began as a spontaneous practice later became a juridically sanctioned norm [i.e., National Sunday laws were enacted and enforced]. The Lord’s Day has structured the history of the Church through two thousand years: how could we think that it will not continue to shape her future?”—Page 11, section 30.

“Given its many meanings and aspects, and its link to the very foundations of the faith, the celebration of the Christian Sunday remains, on the threshold of the Third Millennium, an indispensable element of our Christian identity.”—Page 11, section 30.

THE CHURCH MUST MAKE SURE IT IS REQUIRED TODAY, AS IN EARLIER TIMES.

“Even if in the earliest times it was not judged necessary to be prescriptive, the Church has not ceased to confirm this obligation of conscience [the urgency of requiring obedience to it], which rises from the inner need felt so strongly by Christians of the first centuries. It was only later, faced with the half-heartedness or negligence of some, that the Church had to make explicit the duty to attend Sunday Mass; more often than not, this

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was done in the form of exhortation, but at times the Church had to resort to specific canonical precepts . . . These decrees of local Councils led to a universal practice, the obligatory character of which was taken as something quite normal.”—*Page 17, section 47.*

“The Code of Canon Law of 1917 for the first time gathered this tradition into a universal law. **The present Code reiterates this, saying that ‘on Sundays and the other holy days of obligation the faithful are bound to attend Mass.’ This legislation has normally been understood as entailing a grave obligation:** This is the teaching of the Catechism of the Catholic Church, and it is easy to understand why if we keep in mind how vital Sunday is for the Christian life.”—*Page 17, section 47.*

“For several centuries, Christians observed Sunday simply as a day of worship, without being able to give it the specific meaning of the Sabbath rest. **Only in the fourth century did the civil law of the Roman Empire recognize the weekly recurrence, determining that on ‘the day of the sun’ the judges, the people of the cities and various trade corporations would not work.** Christians rejoiced to see thus removed the obstacles which until then had sometimes made observance of the Lord’s Day heroic [difficult]. They could now devote themselves to prayer in common without hindrance.

“It would therefore be wrong to see in this legislation of the rhythm of the week a mere historical circumstance with no special significance for the Church and which she could simply set aside. **Even after the fall of the Empire, the Councils did not cease to insist upon the arrangements regarding Sunday rest.** In countries where Christians are in the minority and where the festive days of the calendar do not coincide with Sunday, it is still Sunday which remains the Lord’s Day, the day on which the faithful come together for the Eucharistic assembly. But this involves real sacrifices. For Christians it is not normal that Sunday,

the day of joyful celebration, should not be a day of rest, it is difficult for them to keep Sunday holy if they do not have enough free time.

EVEN NON-CHRISTIANS SHOULD BE REQUIRED TO OBSERVE THIS DAY OF REST.

“By contrast **the link between the Lord’s Day and the day of rest in civil society has a meaning and importance which go beyond the distinctly Christian point of view.** [The Sunday rest is needed by everyone.] **The alternation between work and rest, built into human nature, is willed by God Himself,** as appears in the creation story in the Book of Genesis (cf. 2:2-3; Ex. 20:8-11): rest is something “sacred,” because it is man’s way of withdrawing from the sometimes excessive demanding cycle of earthly tasks in order to review his awareness that everything is the work of God.”—*Page 22, sections 64-65.*

“Finally, it should not be forgotten that **even in our own day** work is very oppressive for many people, either because of miserable working conditions and long hours—especially in the poorer regions of the world—or because of the persistence in economically more developed societies of too many cases of injustice and exploitation of man by man. [Everyone needs to stop work once a week.] **When through the centuries, she has made laws concerning Sunday rest, the Church has had in mind above all the work of servants and workers,** certainly not because this work was any less worthy when compared to the spiritual requirements of Sunday observance, but rather because it needed **greater regulation to lighten its burden and thus enable everyone to keep the Lord’s Day holy.** In this matter, my predecessor Pope Leo XIII in his Encyclical *Rerum Novarum* spoke of **Sunday rest as a worker’s right which the State must guarantee.**”—*Page 23, section 66.*

AS WE NEAR THE YEAR 2000, WE MUST WORK TO REINSTITUTE THIS ENFORCEMENT.

“Therefore, also **in the particular circumstances of our own time, Christians will naturally strive to ensure that civil legislation respects their duty to keep Sunday holy.** In any

case, they are obliged in conscience to arrange their Sunday rest in a way which allows them to take part in the Eucharist, refraining from work and activities which are incompatible with the sanctification of the Lord's Day, with its characteristic joy and necessary rest for spirit and body."—Page 23, section 67.

"Dear Brothers and Sisters, **the imminence of the Jubilee invites us to a deeper spiritual and pastoral commitment. Indeed, this is its true purpose. In the Jubilee year, much will be done to give it the particular stamp demanded by the end of the second Millennium** and the beginning of the Third since the Incarnation of the Word of God. But this year and this special time will pass, as we look to other jubilees and other solemn events. As the weekly 'solemnity,' however, **Sunday will continue to shape the time of the Church's pilgrimage**, until that Sunday which will know no evening."—Page 29, section 87.

Here is a front page headline article in the *Detroit News*, for Tuesday, July 7, 1998. The present writer has a photo reprint of this article; but, since there is not room to reprint it, the complete article has been typeset here.

Please note that the authors of the following article, and Jay McNally a lay Catholic leader quoted in it, only had access to an early July "unofficial English translation" of the papal letter.

Since then, the official English translation has been released—which we have quoted from, and which is now available from us (see bottom of this page).

"POPE'S CALL FOR WORSHIP WELCOMED. He warns Catholics to dedicate Sundays to celebrating God—not their free time.

"By Mark Puls and Charles Hurt. *The Detroit News*. Maryann Schreiber, a devout Catholic, works the late, late shift Saturday night and Sunday morning at a hotel.

"She has to make a living, but the Hamtramck woman does so at the cost of mounting guilt over missing church Sunday mornings. [Hamtramck is a Detroit district.]

"I want to go back to the old ways where Sunday was the Lord's day," Schreiber said. 'I agree with the pope. I want that life again.'

"In a day when computer modems are never fast enough and no one seems to have enough time for a full night's rest, Pope John Paul II is issuing a stern warning to Catho-

AS WE LABOR TIRELESSLY, OUR EFFORTS WILL HELP ALL MANKIND.

"Therefore, **dear Brother Bishops and Priests, I urge you to work tirelessly** with the faithful to ensure that the value of this sacred day is understood and lived ever more deeply. **This will bear rich fruit in Christian communities, and will not fail to have a positive influence on civil society as a whole.**

"In coming to know the Church, which every Sunday joyfully celebrates the mystery from which she draws her life, may the men and women of the Third Millennium come to know the Risen Christ. And constantly renewed by the weekly commemoration of Easter, may Christ's disciples be ever more credible in proclaiming the Gospel of salvation and ever more effective in building the civilization of love.

"My blessing to you all!

"From the Vatican, on 31 May, the Solemnity of Pentecost, in the year 1998, the twentieth of my Pontificate."—Page 29, section 87.

lics that they should set aside Sunday for worship—not errands or their free time.

"**'This really is an extraordinary move,'** said Jay McNally, executive director of Call to Holiness, a Metro Detroit lay group that promotes traditional Catholic teachings. **'This appears to be the strongest words the pope has issued. Period.'**

"The pontiff used his weekly address Sunday from his window over St. Peter's Square to urge church members to make time to keep the Sabbath holy. And today, the Vatican is expected to issue an Apostolic letter from the pope further stressing the Third Commandment. Apostolic letters are incorporated into church rules. Sundays have come to be 'felt and lived only as a weekend,' John Paul lamented Sunday. 'It (should be) the weekly day in which the church celebrates the resurrection of Christ. In obedience to the Third Commandment, Sunday must be sanctified, above all, by participation in Holy Mass.'

"**In his letter, the pope goes on to say a violator should be 'punished as a heretic,'** said McNally, who read an unofficial English translation of the letter on a Vatican Web site."—*Detroit News*, Tuesday, July 7, 1998 [emphasis ours].

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What great crisis is coming on the Roman Catholic Church?

Will there be another World War?

Will the United States ever suffer defeat?

What race will the Antichrist belong to?

What will he look like?

What is the first plague?

What part will China play in the coming crisis?

Why did John Paul II go to Denver?

What great sign in the sky will everyone on earth see?

What can faithful Catholics do to postpone the coming disasters?

What are the beasts of Revelation 13?

What is the third secret of Fatima?

Within which years will the final crisis occur?

How long will it last?

The conversion of what nation can stop the coming crisis?

Why does John Paul especially believe in the apparitions?

What one person has been appointed to protect the faithful during the coming crisis?

What will happen to the Catholic Church after Christ returns?

Who will be ruler of the New Jerusalem?

What great tragedy will occur later in eternity, after Satan and the wicked are all destroyed?

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