

Fifteenth Sunday Ordinary Time 2017

The Third Commandment.

Today we want to answer the two questions we asked last week: Why does God rest? Why does such a day need to be an act of creation? We begin by carefully noting that God ends with the seventh day. God does not start creating some more on the eighth day, ninth day, tenth day, etc.

Exodus 20:1-17

Remember to keep the Sabbath Day.

Six days you may labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord, your God. No work may be done then either by you or your slave.

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.

Deuteronomy 5: 1-20

Take care to keep holy the Sabbath Day as the Lord, your God, commanded you.

Six days you may labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord, your God. No work may be done then. Your slave should rest as you do.

For remember that you too were once slaves in Egypt, and the Lord, your God, brought you from there with his strong hand and outstretched arm.

That is why the Lord, your God, has commanded you to observe the Sabbath Day.

The sixth day ends with the last of the creatures being created. God creates on the seventh day! But God does not create anything belonging to the natural world. God creates not a creature but a day! This observation unlocks the door to the proper understanding of the whole of creation. Listen to Jesus: "Then he said to them [the Pharisees], 'The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath.'" (Mk. 2:27) Jesus felt a need to correct the Pharisees on their interpretation of the story of creation. At the same time, Jesus makes a clear distinction between the act of creating a creature of nature and the act of creating a special day. He calls the Sabbath day a day that was *made* or created. Again, as simple as this observation may seem, the acknowledgment of this fact remains crucial to understanding the Third Commandment.