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Peace, Sun Prairie  
May 22, 2005  
Festival of the Holy Trinity

Genesis 2:1-3

### ON THE SEVENTH DAY GOD RESTED

Sleep is a commodity. Maybe even this morning we woke regretting that we hadn't gone to bed just a half hour earlier last night. On a typical day don't we so often long for just a little peace, a little rest, a little relief from the stresses, annoyances and aggravations? As we get older we long for a little security, and little peace of mind from all the what-ifs, all the uncertainties, all the dreadful likelihoods, the inevitables that we never wanted to face. We worry a lot more and sleep a lot less than we did when we were in our prime.

On this Festival of the Holy Trinity we consider what we are told in Genesis chapter two: On the seventh day God rested. As with everything in the Bible, God told us that not for His own benefit, but for ours. For what God established on that seventh day was something he intended for all of mankind to enjoy forever after.

The fact that God rested does not mean He grew tired or that He ceased being the operating, controlling force in everything. Even today the Bible says, "*In him we live and move and have our being,*" and "*In him all things hold together.*" Genesis 2 explains, that God rested simply means He ceased His activity of creating things out of nothing. It says: *Thus the heavens and the earth were completed in all their vast array. By the seventh day God had finished the work he had been doing; so on the seventh day he rested from all his work. And God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it he rested from all the work of creating that he had done.*

God blessed that seventh day. Beginning with the eighth day and every day from then on mankind would enjoy that blessing. It was

the blessing of perfect rest. That is not to say Adam and Eve would forever be lying in hammocks eating grapes. For their happiness God gave them the work of managing and taking care of the Garden of Eden as well as overseeing the rest of the world. Even if they had not sinned there still would have been the joyful labor of raising children and maintaining families, as well as coordinating, rehearsing and conducting their worship of God.

But the rest that Adam and Eve enjoyed by God's blessing from that Seventh day was the rest of being at peace with God. They harbored no resentment toward God or toward any superior who would have told them what they ought to do, no inklings of guilt eating away at them, no heavy weight of regret, no deep-seated anger, no harping temptations or consuming desires sapping their strength, no inner conflict. They would not have suffered the insult, aggravation and despondency of a heart that worships its own rights as being sacred and reacts vindictively when it perceives those rights being treaded on. They did not have to suffer any anxiety, heartache or loneliness wondering where God was, what His intentions were toward them, why He would permit this or that, whether He loved them or whether everything would turn out alright in the end. They would not have felt the need to avoid anyone.

Obligation to them was a joy, not a burden. There would have been no need for a cumbersome attempt to right the things they'd done wrong. There would have been no pain shooting through their nerve endings, no muscle tissue inflamed with infection or joint tissues deformed by arthritic build-up, or the wreak of a diseased body. There was no death, no fear of losing a precious child or sorrow of losing a loved parent. There was no threat of God's anger or judgment or hell hanging over everything. Things that are in themselves basically exhausting.

In other words, there was no sin. They enjoyed rest with God, the rest He established on the seventh day –a life without sin.

But sadly that rest was interrupted when Adam and Eve fell into sin. It changed everything as you and I well know. And now rest of every kind, inwardly and outwardly, is truly a commodity.

But now listen to the words of Jesus who came to remedy our circumstances: *“Come to me all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.”* God the Father who created us sent His Son from eternity to rescue us. God the Son left behind His throne of glory. The Bible says, *He took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows.* Christ took our sin on Himself and suffered the full punishment that we deserved when He died on the cross. Our sin had divorced us from God with all the duress that divorce brings, but Christ, by His death, has reconciled us to God. Our sin is forgiven. God is no longer at odds with us. Through faith in Christ God is our loving Father once again. We have peace with God.

God the Holy Spirit who hovered over the surface of the deep as He created the world, also hovered over you when He recreated you with the water of Holy Baptism. There your sin was washed away. You were labeled with the name of the Triune God. The Triune God gave you rest, the same rest that He established on the seventh day of the world, the same rest Adam and Eve enjoyed before they sinned. You are at rest with God through faith in His forgiveness because of Jesus Christ.

The Bible says, *There remains, then, a Sabbath-rest for the people of God; for anyone who enters God’s rest also rests from his own labors, just as God did from his. Let us, therefore, make every effort to enter that rest so that no one will fall... by disobedience.* Whenever we confess our sins and receive absolution, or hear God’s Word or celebrate the Sacrament we are entering God’s rest. Our rest in Christ is a relieved conscience because our sins are forgiven. Our rest in Christ is the way Christ’s forgiveness compels us to forgive others and be gracious rather than hold a tiring grudge. Our rest in Christ is the relief that even when we suffer God promises to use it for blessing because He is no longer holding our sins against us. Our rest in Christ is the anticipation of the resurrection of the body and the life everlasting that renders all suffering here on earth miniscule by comparison. Our rest in

Christ is the same rest that God originally intended for us when He created the world. Christ has restored it. On the seventh day God rested. He blessed that day. By giving us Christ He has blessed us with a day of rest that never ends.