

## **SUNDAY**

The weekly commemoration of the Resurrection and appearance of the Lord to His disciples (Jn. 20:19, 26). It falls on the first day of every week.

Sunday has been kept by [Christians](#) since apostolic times as a day of joyful worship. Saint Paul and the Christians of Troas gathered on the first day of the week “to break bread” (Acts 20:7), and the apostle, writing to the Corinthians, asked his converts to [save](#) their alms on this day (1 Cor. 16:2).

In opposition to Gnostic Manichaeian asceticism, the Coptic church condemned the practice of fasting on Sunday. Apostolical Canon 66 decrees, “If any of the clergy be found fasting on the Lord’s day or on the Sabbath, excepting the one only, let him be deposed. If a layman, let him be excommunicated.” The “Constitutions of the Holy Apostles” declares that “he will be guilty of [sin](#) who fasts on the Lord’s day, being the day of the Resurrection.” Canon 18 of the Council of Gangra (325-381) anathematizes the Eustathians for teaching fasting on the Lord’s day.

Although kneeling was the common posture of prayer in the early church, prostration is not allowed at prayer on the Lord’s Day and the fifty days between Easter and Pentecost. Peter I of Alexandria (300-311) said in Canon 15, “We keep the Lord’s Day as a day of joy, because then our Lord rose. Our tradition is, not to kneel on that day” (“Apostolical Canons,” 1956, p. 601).

In the Coptic church, marriages are now contracted on any nonfasting day, especially Sundays and Saturdays. The usual hour for celebration of marriages in the church is from five o’clock onward into the evening. The couple to be married normally receive Holy Communion either two or three days or even one week before the marriage service.

The Commemorations and the Intercessions of the Martyrs and Saints

form a consistent part of the PSALMODIA, the liturgy, and the Synaxarion of the Coptic church, and are to be sung or read every day, including Sunday. This does not contradict canon 51 of the Council of Laodicea (343-381), which states, “The nativities of Martyrs are not to be celebrated in Lent, but commemorations of the Holy Martyrs are to be made on the Sabbaths and the Lord’s days.” This is because the Divine [Liturgy](#) was not to be celebrated in Lent, except on Saturday and Sunday, a practice still observed by the Syrians, Armenians, and Greeks.

On Sundays all the year round, burial and memorial services for the dead are to be performed without using the mourning melody. Hymns are to be sung only to the BIKAWARNIDAS, called *al-lahn al-sanawi* (i.e., the ordinary melody; see LAHN).

This is in accordance with canon 11 of Pope CHRISTODOULUS (1046-1077), which says, “And there shall not be allowed on Sundays weeping or lamentation or speeches, and it is not allowed to a Christian to do this or anything of it for the dead, except the Intercession and the Eucharist and the prayer for the dead and alms, in the measure of his (the Christian’s) ability, that the Lord may have mercy upon the souls of your dead.”

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

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