

THE “SABBATH” AS A CREATION DAY IN THE SERVICE OF THE “GREAT TRANSFORMATION”

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■ ABSTRACT

The article builds an approach to the Sabbath from a systematic-theological perspective. In doing so, it builds on the study by Ottilia Lukács in the sense that historical- or liberation-theological perspectives on the Sabbath are linked to the more recent creation-theological approaches; moreover, there is a strong connection between social-ethical and cultic dimensions. The term Sabbath is presented within the context of Old Testament traditions, but the New Testament perspective of Jesus of Nazareth on the preservation and fulfilment of the Sabbath is also considered, with special emphasis on the Christian Sunday. The systematic-theological interpretation is embedded a panorama of the challenges that the environmental crisis and climate change pose for society, politics and the Christian community. In this sense, the Sabbath is understood as a day of “transformation,” the observance of which in current practice can contribute to the necessary “paradigm shift,” the “cultural revolution” and “ecological conversion” promulgated by Pope Francis names it in his encyclicals *Laudato si’* (2015), *Veritatis gaudium* (2017) and *Querida Amazonia* (2020).

Key words: Sabbath, Sunday, Creation Day, Great Transformation, environmental crisis, creation spirituality

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1. Introduction: The Sabbath and the Sunday Commandment in the Service of Creation and the “Good Life”

In the Old and New Testaments, the “Sabbath” is mentioned about 180 times. The command to honour the Sabbath, which follows the commandment not to “take the name of the Lord your God in vain” (Ex 20:7), is a central tenet of the Ten Commandments given to Moses at Mount Sinai, central to the self-identification of the people of Israel:

Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor, and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God. On it you shall not do any work, you, or your son, or your daughter, your male servant, or your female servant, or your livestock, or the sojourner who is within your gates. 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 (Ex 20:8-11).

The Sabbath commandment as it figures in the Old Testament or the Hebrew Bible, which originated in post-exilic times, is the focus of the exegetical work of the Hungarian theologian and biblical scholar Ottilia Lukács, who has presented a study on the “Inner-Biblical Interpretation of the Sabbath Commandment” in her volume *Sabbath in the Making*^[1]:

Within the present context, we assume that the notion of Sabbath might have contributed to the identity building and shaping of

the community in which it emerged, and it might have been part of the cultural memory. Consequently, it is my suggestion that the examination of the Sabbath as an identity marker contributes to the understanding of the literary and redactional development of the Sabbath commandment and vice versa.^[2]

In exegetical works and biblical-theological studies of the last decades, the “liberation theological” perspective of the Sabbath commandment has been brought into focus; special emphasis has been placed on the connection of the Sabbath commandment with the “jubilee,” the “Sabbatical year.”^[3] God’s commandment to interrupt work establishes an order that enables togetherness and is oriented towards the weak and needy. Jesus of Nazareth will take up precisely this central commandment in his first public appearance, recorded in the Gospel According to Saint Luke (Lk 4:16-22). Jesus quotes the Prophet Isaiah, saying, “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor” (verses 18-19). When Jesus voices criticism of the Sabbath, it is in response to the enquiries made of him concerning his disciples who went through the cornfields on the Sabbath, plucking ears of corn and consuming the grains (cf. Lk 6:1-5; Mk 2:23-28). When Jesus heals on the Sabbath, as in the case of the man with the “withered hand” (cf. Lk 6:6-11; Mk 3:1-6), he does not suspend the

Sabbath commandment as such. Rather he rejects false ritualism and legalistic piety in order to make room for God and his healing and liberating power.^[4]

This becomes clear when he asks whether it is permissible to “to do good or to do harm, to save life or to destroy it?” on the Sabbath (Lk 6:9), as well as in the emphatic statement “The Son of Man is lord of the Sabbath” (Lk 6:5). In this respect, Jesus embeds the Sabbath commandment back into the structure of the commandments that the people of Israel received; it is the central “link” between loving God and loving one’s neighbour: to honour God, as the commandments preceding the Sabbath commandment make clear, and to love one’s neighbour, to honour one’s father and mother (Ex 20:12) and to respect one’s neighbour with all that belongs to him, family and possessions are two commandments inextricably linked. This “in-between” world of the Sabbath creates a space that connects the recognition of God with the recognition of one’s neighbour, a space in which human beings experience themselves as children of God, as “creatures” in relation to all other creatures. This concept will also serve as the bridge between the Sabbath and Sunday, which will develop in the young community of Christians who, having first celebrated the Sabbath in the Jewish community, go on to celebrate Sunday in memory of Jesus of Nazareth, the Christ, and of his death and resurrection. The Son of Man who is “lord of the

Sabbath” (Lk 6:5) does not suspend the commandment but fulfils it completely.^[5]

In her study, Otilia Lukács draws on the exegetical work of recent decades. She assumes that the Sabbath commandment was an “identity marker” in the times of the Babylonian exile and that the post-exilic text Ex 20, insofar as it is embedded in the history of Israel’s liberation, is proof of this fact.^[6] Through her intertextual approach and precise tracking of the inner-biblical interpretation of the Sabbath commandment, she also builds a bridge between this historical approach and the creation-theological perspective on the Sabbath, as expressed in the Seven Days of Creation as recorded in Gen 1:1-31; 2:1-3. In Gen 2:1-3 we read:

Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. And on the seventh day God finished his work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all his work that he had done. So God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it God rested from all his work that he had done in creation.

Many exegetical works in recent years have discussed the creation-theological perspective of Sabbath rest and the structuring of time, the „completion” of creation on the seventh day or “rest” from the work of creation on that day, and have also elaborated on the connection of the Sabbath to the Akkadian new moon festival and contrasted it with the historical perspective of the Sabbath com-

mandment. “The Sabbath commandment,” Lukács summarises,

is very much based on the Sabbath day and on the institution of the week (the rhythm of 6+1 days), therefore, a short discussion of these issues is required here. (1) The Hebrew term שבת derived from the Akkadian term šap/battu, which was used to denote the new moon in the Akkadian calendar, and hence (2) the Sabbath supposedly was the full moon day in the Israelite calendar during the pre-exilic period; (3) only during the exile, or even later, שבת was applied to designate the seventh day of the week. Thus, as soon as the Sabbath was considered as a holy day, it created the seven-day week now known as an established institution.^[7]

Without wanting to make a direct judgment – which is probably also difficult to underpin historically-critically – in favor of one or the other perspective, and without focusing in a polarising way either on the social-ethical dimension of the Sabbath or on the cultic development of this day, Ottilia Lukács nevertheless insists on the distinction between pre-exilic and post-exilic text traditions and embeds the Sabbath commandment firmly in the post-exilic tradition, as God’s commandment to his people that creates identity. The concept of the Sabbath has grown precisely in and against the background of the experience of the Babylonian exile.

I maintain that the ‘pre-exilic Sabbath’ (which is mentioned together with the new moons) and the ‘exilic weekly Sabbath’ were never merged together. Instead, both

preserved its original, or better: discrete characters and roles in the Israelite religion. In other words, the Sabbath which coincides with the seventh day of the week and which is regulated by the Sabbath commandments, most likely emerged and developed as the identity marker of the exiled and returned Judean community.^[8]

According to Lukács, the traditions of the “full moon Sabbath” and the “weekly Sabbath” never mingled. The author enumerates the three “significant functions” of the weekly Sabbath, which became a source of identity for the people of Israel during exile:

(1) the rest-day, which was applied also for the slaves, provided the exiled community an ‘Israelite identity’ that distinguished them from the surrounding milieu and made it possible to survive exile as the people of God; (2) it was an essential element of a completely re-established monotheistic calendar, more precisely, a ‘sabbathized’ priestly calendar that received a strong monotheistic emphasis; and (3) it contributed to the establishment of a ‘special sacred time’, namely, the seventh day...^[9]

In what follows, an approach to the “Sabbath” is built from a systematic-theological perspective; the exegetical debates of the last decades can only be presupposed and the study and thesis of Lukács becomes relevant in the sense that historical or liberation-theological perspectives on the Sabbath are connected with the more recent creation-theological approaches, and thus, social-ethical and cultic dimensions are interpreted side by side. The

term “Sabbath” is linked to the Old Testament traditions, but the New Testament perspective of Jesus of Nazareth on the preservation and fulfilment of the Sabbath is also considered, and from there, a bridge is built to the Christian Sunday. The systematic-theological interpretation is embedded in the challenges that the environmental crisis and climate change pose for society, politics and the churches; the Sabbath is understood in this sense as a day of “transformation” whose remembrance and present practice can contribute to the necessary “paradigm shift” and the “cultural revolution” Pope Francis refers to in his encyclicals *Laudato si’* (2015), *Veritatis gaudium* (2017) and *Querida Amazonia* (2020). The paradigm shift proposed by the Holy Father is necessary in view of the destruction of the foundations of life for all of creation, which has come to a head in recent years and challenges humanity to a “Great Transformation” at all levels of community – in politics, the economy, social-, cultural-, and everyday life.^[10] The link to liberation theology and ecological considerations, as Leonardo Boff has been presenting them in the Latin American context for 40 years, is palpable, as is the connection to process-theological and eco-feminist works by the US Protestant theologian Sallie McFague, whose studies grow out of the dialogue with new scientific theories and lay the foundations for a dynamic understanding of creation.

The Sabbath commandment in Ex 20 – which concludes with the formulation in verse 11,

that “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” – is thus related to the creation text of Gen 2:2: “And on the seventh day God finished his work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all his work that he had done.” The “rest” that Augustine also focuses on in his interpretation of the creation narrative^[11] is understood as the “completion” of the work of creation in the sense that the works of the other days are not relativised here – they are considered “good” by God (Gen 1:17. 21. 31). “Rest,” which is attributed to God and which human beings have to keep because God has “sanctified” it, explicitly refers to a basic dimension, which is inscribed in creation on all days, but is remembered in a special way on the day of “rest”: everything grows out of God’s loving and living relationship, life is to be lived out of this relationship, and the human being especially, created in the “image” of God (Gen 1:26), is called to conform to this loving and living relationship in his work in creation. In this sense, the Sabbath is a day of “transformation” because the day of “rest,” which is an interruption of the rhythm of work, reminds us of the original meaning of creation and of the goodness that God has placed in it, to which all activity within creation, human activity above all, must correspond. On the Sabbath, we are therefore “called,” according to the Jewish theologian Adam Joshua Heschel, “to take part

in that which is eternal in time, to turn from the created to the mystery of creation itself, from the world of creation to the creation of the world.”^[12]

In this way, the Sabbath has become the mark of identity of Jewish communities. To this day, the Sabbath is celebrated as a welcoming of the “Sabbath Queen,”^[13] which act opens up an “in-between” space where God inscribes himself in life and the horizon of life opens up to receive God. This open horizon lends urgency to loving one’s neighbour and caring for the “house of creation,” which requires radical conversion and transformation, especially when injustice is done to one’s neighbour and when the very foundations of life are destroyed. This is also the deep meaning of Sunday, which Christians celebrate as the first day of the week in memory of the death and resurrection of Jesus, a feast day in which the profound dimension of the Sabbath is inscribed in the celebration of the Eucharist, and praise of the Creator, who himself has approved of what he has created, and to whom honour is to be given accordingly. The Sabbath is a grand search for possibilities to participate in radical transformation in the service of caring for the common house of creation. Thus Sabbath and Sunday are “days of creation” and of “transformation” when the rhythms of human life and work are interrupted the horizon of human life is opened to receive God.

2. times of transformation: ecological challenges and the “planetary boundaries”

Every year, “Earth Overshoot Day” is calculated so as to mark the date at which point human consumption of resources exceeds or “overshoots” what the earth can (re-) generate over the course of a year. A country’s Overshoot Day is the day on which the Earth’s Overshoot Day would fall if all humans consumed at the rate of the country in question. In 2022, Overshoot Day fell on 28 July; for the rest of the year, we lived at the expense of the Earth, consuming resources taken away from future generations. In 2000, the Earth Charter, a worldwide ecumenical initiative, named voluntary commitments for a sustainable lifestyle and guiding principles for politics, the economy and society for sustainable development. Since the First Ecumenical Assembly in Europe (Basel, 1989), the Christian churches have called for ecological responsibility, conversion and “transformation.” In the spirit of ecumenical solidarity, the “Day of Creation” is celebrated in September or October, and the harvest festival in October also becomes a reminder in many congregations to use resources sparingly, to combine thanks to the Creator with insight into “ecological conversion”^[14] – a formulation first used by Pope Francis in his encyclical *Laudato si’* (2015). According to the Earth Charter, a new beginning is necessary, as well as “a new paradigm that brings about sustainability for the com-

mon house, the Earth, and for all living beings that inhabit it in a very natural way.^[15] Many ecological movements worldwide are united by the motif of the “Great Transformation” in the face of the dramatic consequences of the environmental crisis and climate change. This concept includes both the transformation of global economic processes, and also the transformation of personal lifestyles if life on planet Earth is to have a future. The perspectives of the “planetary boundaries,”^[16] represented by worldwide research institutions such as the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research, touch on church positions; the “cry of the earth” that Pope Francis speaks of in *Laudato si’* (2015) and his letter *Querida Amazonia* (2020) published following the Amazon Synod (October 2019) reminds humans of their “terrestrial” embeddedness and the very concrete “*fines terrae*” or “ends of the earth.” The French philosopher and sociologist Bruno Latour points to this embeddedness in his recent publications, for example in his “*Terrestrial Manifesto*,”^[17] which has also been received in the German context. Latour applies the concept of the apocalyptic onset of the end times to space, insisting that the planet Earth sets us very concrete limits and that it is increasingly being destroyed by human intervention.^[18] Latour, like the Brazilian liberation theologian Leonardo Boff, subscribes to the Gaia hypothesis of the chemist, physician and biophysicist James Ephraim Lovelock, who died on 26 July 2022 at the age of 103. As early as the 1970s, Lovelock spoke of Gaia,

Mother Earth, whose intricate network of life holds together the ecological balance of the entire planet. Gaia, as Boff summarizes, is an *evolving system consisting of all living things and their surface environment, the oceans, the atmosphere, the crustal rock... a system that has emerged from the common and reciprocal evolution of organisms and their environment in the course of the developmental ages of life on earth.... In dialogue with the energies of the universe and the earth, and in interaction with the other living organisms, these have created for themselves a habitat, a habitat favourable to the maintenance of relatively constant conditions for all the elements which constitute life.*^[9]

In this respect, the upcoming transformation has to do with a new view of the earth and requires insight into the interconnectedness of everything created and of all living beings. In a reflection on the Covid pandemic, Bruno Latour recalls Kafka’s narrative in his essay “Where am I? Lessons from the Lockdown.”^[20] Latour reflects on Kafka’s story and the transformation of Gregor Samsa. By developing a shell, a carapace, and becoming able to take on other perspectives in space, like that of a beetle, he gains a different relationship to living beings and a different understanding of what it means to be human. The fundamental question, then, is not “who” I am but “where” I am. Identity is not a question of development, but of “enfolding,”^[21] of a new understanding of our relationship to the earth: “We are enclosed in it, but it is not a prison; we are merely enfolded in it. To emancipate

ourselves is not to step out of it, but to explore its entanglements, folds, superimpositions, interconnections.”^[22] Latour develops the vision that people have to go through a process of transformation like Gregor Samsa to become “earth-attached” and that these people “use another dimension, that of the interwoven forms of life, which obliges them to constantly cross and therefore question the relationship between small and large, limited and interwoven, slow and fast, in every subject.”^[23] These are not analyses or solutions, but visions that send one in search of possible solutions:

... you must scatter to the maximum, fan out to explore all your capacities for survival, to conspire, as best you can, with the effective powers that have made the places you have landed inhabitable. Under the vault of heaven, which has become burdensome again, other people, mixed with other matter, together with other living beings, are forming other peoples. They are emancipating themselves at last. They end the lockdown themselves. They transform themselves.^[24]

Latour’s apocalyptic visions are embedded in a new ecological thinking, having grown out of the experience that in this “Age of the Anthropocene,” changes affecting earth and the entire ecosystem are man-induced. While apocalyptic crisis scenarios are on the rise in secular journalism, even as Christian ideas are trivialised, Latour creatively appropriates these metaphors. It is precisely here that enlightenment by theology is needed, and in this

respect the ecological crisis in the Anthropocene, in the words of the German social ethicist Markus Vogt, has an “eminently religious dimension.” It is “religion-producing: it generates a new form of questioning about what sustains our existence, gives it a future and lends it meaning.”^[25] To put all of this in the theological terms, this awakening is about “conversion” and radical “transformation” and, in this sense, about a “new creation,” which according to the Christian perspective begins to be realized in the Kingdom of God proclaimed by Jesus of Nazareth and in the event of his death and resurrection. In the Christ event, God has disrupted and broken open history; he himself will make “all things new” again, according to the hope expressed in the Book of Revelation, the last book of the New Testament (cf. Rev 21:5). This broad horizon for the future enables human beings to act from a perspective of hope and with an orientation towards a togetherness which is liberating and appreciative and which respects the limits of all life that was redeemed by Jesus of Nazareth. Human beings are called to act in the service of the future and of a good life within the limits of this planet.

The path towards such a transformation requires the highest scientific efforts in all areas of human thinking and research, yet it is not only an intellectual process, but rather involves holistic conversion and a renewed theology of creation. As the Brazilian liberation theologian Leonardo Boff writes:

We need imagination, passion and creative enthusiasm. We need to pick up the pieces of the old paradigm, gather all the wisdom of humanity, evaluate all the knowledge beneficial to life and humanity, be inspired by the generous dreams of so many cultures – especially the indigenous cultures that have known how to maintain a sacred respect for Mother Earth and to realise a respectful coexistence with her.^[26]

The new paradigm includes a new “cosmovision,” a “cosmology of change,” and this is “the expression of the ecocene that will put the ecological question at the centre of its attention,”^[27] a new paradigm that has been developing for 100 years: “It derives from the sciences that explore the universe, the earth and life. It locates our reality within cosmogenesis, the process of formation of the cosmos itself, which began with the Big Bang some 13.7 billion years ago. The universe is constantly expanding, self-organising, self-creating, and harbouring meaning.”^[28] The natural state of this cosmology “is one of evolution rather than stability, of change and adaptability rather than immobility and permanence. In it, everything is interconnected in networks, and nothing exists outside this play of relations. Therefore, all forms of being are interdependent and work together to develop together, to ensure the balance of all factors and to maintain biodiversity.”^[29] This means that the human being is integrated into a network of relationships. The human being is placed “in the midst of this nature,” “where we unfold in deep harmony and synergy, open to

ever new changes.”^[30] Accordingly, nature is an “open system” that “can always integrate new interactions and energy flows – in contrast to a closed system that is encapsulated within itself and finds itself outside the process of dialogue in the universe.”^[31]

These groundbreaking reflections on the ecocene, which Leonardo Boff develops in dialogue with scientific theorising, are also connected with process-theological approaches to thinking about creation. We can rethink the relationship between God and the world and the relationship between human and extra-human reality with the help of process-philosophical reflections, as presented by Alfred North Whitehead and Charles Hartshorne. Such a view places the experience of the dynamics of the spirit in all reality at the centre, understands God and the world to be in the process of becoming, and takes as its starting point the fundamental experience of the vulnerability of all life. God himself suffers, as Sallie McFague puts it, in and with this “body” of the world and is in this sense “vulnerable.”^[32] This view of the co-suffering God also changes the perspective on man, who is not the “lord and master of nature” that René Descartes saw him as at the cusp of modernity. Such a view of the cosmos invites man to reconsider his own vulnerability, to gain a humility that grows out of his being embedded in the “humus” of the earth, and to attend to all living things. Nature is thereby granted a dignity of her own, of which man is only the administrator.^[33]

These are reflections that Pope Francis summarises at the end of *Laudato si'* with the keyword of creation spirituality. Such a creation spirituality is condensed in the celebration of the Sabbath, of the Sunday, the day of rest, which at the same time means the highest form of dynamism. To let the Sabbath dawn, according to Leonardo Boff, is to “leave behind the old cosmology” in order to “reinvent our civilisation.” “The main institutions of modernity, including agriculture, religion, education, economy, must be rethought from within a living, intelligent and self-organising universe. Instead of downgrading the system of life and the earth, humanity will have to learn to ally itself with the community of life in a way that increasingly reinforces interdependence. This task will surely take the talent and energy of millions of people from all cultures throughout the 21st century.”^[34] Achieving the “Great Transformation” is “probably the great historical challenge of the present time”^[35] but it is possible to meet this challenge. The hope for finding ways into the future is grounded in a theological perspective in the “breathing space”^[36] that the Sabbath signifies, which is summed up in Scripture with the Sabbath commandment: “Six days you shall labor, and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God. On it you shall not do any work... 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” (Ex 20:9-11).

3. Sabbath and the Dynamics of Transformation

The basic theological motif of transformation is inscribed in the biblical texts on the Sabbath, in the Jewish Sabbath liturgy, and also in the development of the Christian, which cannot be equated with the Sabbath simpliciter. The Sabbath means a time of rest, a cessation of work for humans and for everything that belongs to them, their property, their slaves (a reference to the social order at the time of the writing of the scriptural texts and far into modern times) and for their livestock. The Sabbath also prescribes rest for the strangers who abide on the territory of the Chosen People, and this is justified with a reference back to the creation-theological statement of God resting on the seventh day, the Lord’s day, on the seventh day of the week, when humans and animals can “catch their breath,” as it were, and experience an abundance of life and vitality.

From the divine standpoint, life is inscribed in every day of creation. The Sabbath, blessed and sanctified by God (cf. Ex 20:11), forms, according to the systematic-theological interpretation, an “in-between” world in which God’s space and man’s space touch, an “in-between” that reminds man of his being created, of his dignity as a child of God, of having been created in the image of God, and thus, of his mission and obligation to live up to this dignity in his labour of shaping a “wor-

thy” togetherness and a “good life” for all creation. The celebration of the Sabbath or Sunday, as well as the renewed remembrance of the Sabbath commandment, inscribe the dynamics of transformation into the fabric of life. The significance of the Sabbath as a day of transformation is elaborated in three steps that are oriented towards the theological perspective on creation presented by Dorothee Sölle in her study *Lieben und Arbeiten* (Loving and Working).^[37] First, she contemplates “working,” then “loving,” and then, the inter-relatedness of both perspectives and the associated dynamics of transformation.

3.1 Working

When, in the face of the environmental crisis, climate change, and the depletion of resources, there is talk of the need for a “Great Transformation,” human beings and their activities come into focus. They are called upon to shape their activities and, in this sense, their “work,” with creativity and foresight to bring about a renewed togetherness. This togetherness entails conserving resources, working towards sustainability, and being aware of the limits of planet Earth so that the living material of Gaia is respected and renewed, and in this way, a future is made possible. From the perspective of the Great Transformation and the scientific approaches that constitute and justify it, the functional understanding of the economy and of social and political togetherness that has developed in modernity has been heavily criticized. This understanding of

socio-economics sees work in the service of the increase of wealth and of economic and social progress, a definition of work that has been challenged from different perspectives since the nineteenth century. Critics have pointed out that such a conception of work leads to an “exhaustion of the self” (cf. Alain Ehrenberg) and a perversion of human life. Many new approaches to work have been presented in the last 50 years, and ecclesiastical statements such as John Paul II’s important social encyclical *Laborem exercens* (1981)^[38] and theological publications such as the above-mentioned study by the Protestant theologian Dorothee Sölle, are part of this critique. They develop a new perspective on work with a view guided by the theology of creation. Work is certainly “toil,” but the theological interpretation that sees in work only toil and punishment in view of the “lost paradise” (cf. Gen 3:16-24) has been overcome, especially from a Catholic perspective, with the positive appreciation of work in the Pastoral Constitution of the Second Vatican Council. Man as the “image of God” continues to develop “the work of the Creator” in his work on the various levels, including his mundane everyday activities:

Man, created in God’s image, has indeed received the commission to subdue the earth and all that belongs to it, to govern the world in justice and holiness, and through the recognition of God as the Creator of all things, to relate himself and the totality of reality to God, so that everything may be subject to man and God’s name may be marvellous in

all the earth. This also applies to ordinary everyday activity; for men and women who, for example, in earning a living for themselves and their families, carry out their activity in such a way that it is a corresponding service to the community, may be convinced that by their work they are advancing the work of the Creator, that they are providing for the welfare of their brethren, and that by their personal effort they are contributing to the historical fulfilment of the divine plan (GS 34).

Through work, man's response to the divine claim to creation is realised, and his dignity is expressed as responsibility towards himself, towards others, and towards the whole of creation. It is precisely on these principles, as John Paul II formulated following *Gaudium et Spes* (GS), that the "primacy of work" (LE 12) is founded. "Through his work," says the Council text, "man not only transforms things and society, but also perfects himself. He learns many things, develops his abilities, transcends himself and rises above himself. Growth of this kind, properly understood, is worth more than accumulated external wealth. The value of human beings lies more in themselves than in their possessions. Likewise, whatever men and women do to achieve a greater justice, a wider brotherhood, and a more humane order of social interdependence, is more valuable than technical progress" (GS 35).^[39]

The French Dominican Marie-Dominique Chenu has unfolded this positive view of work theologically in terms of creation. Work, ac-

ording to Chenu, is a decisive "factor in the becoming of humanity as a whole, a factor of 'humanisation,' it is the pivot of its 'socialisation,' by virtue of which humanity travels a decisive road towards its socialisation and its collectivity."^[40] Chenu sees the work of man at the level of "creatio continua." Creation is not complete; man participates in the process of creation with his work, enabling the order of creation and the order of salvation to meet: "Through man, or more precisely, through the human act of transforming the world, the cosmos itself enters into the plan of salvation."^[41] Work is the process by which – through the activity of human beings – the network of creation can be shaped to allow the original mission of creation to shine again through all brokenness. In work, man expresses his "co-creativity."^[42] Work is "activity in nature," and "participation in the divine activity." Man is a "co-worker in creation" and a "demiurge of its unfolding through his activity as discoverer, beneficiary and spiritual builder of nature."^[43]

Marie-Dominique Chenu thinks highly of human beings, and this is an expression of his incarnational approach taken from Patristic and Scholastic theologians. These thinkers speak of the divine Logos who enters the world in freedom and love, who "takes on flesh," and in his life, death and resurrection, renews the world and reality of mankind. In this way, the Logos affirms the original goodness of creation and the freedom of the human which stems from his dignity as a child

of God. Even the “spiritual perversion of the divine plan” was, according to Chenu, “accepted by God.”^[44] Work in this sense is also toil. Work can be perverted and can lead to “exhaustion of the self.” Inscribed in it are the limitations, fragility and possible culpability of the human being. Work is thus marked by the fallenness that runs through creation, by the indissolubility of evil and the possible perversion of the “good life.” Thus work can take on alienated forms; like all creation, it is threatened by the rupture of relationships. Work unfolds under the guise of broken freedom, and thus, it exhausts. It is permeated by the tension between freedom and necessity. Work, like every human activity, can be perverted into power if it is made into a self-referential activity of man and becomes “absolute,” thereby failing to refer back to the creation of all things.

Therefore, work must be related to Sabbath rest. Work and love, according to Dorothee Sölle, must always go hand in hand. The “human being capable of work and love corresponds to the Creator.”^[45] Work must always grow out of Sabbath rest because only in this way does the human being realise his or her dignity as an image of God and “co-creator.” “Creatio continua” takes shape as a dynamic cooperation of God and the human being, a provision of God in the self-realisation of the human being as he shapes the world, which is constantly in the process of becoming, just as God himself is “in the process of becoming”

in it. According to Dorothee Sölle, “there is an indissoluble interrelation between God and the claim to absolute human dignity.”^[46] A theology of work is developed from a theology of the Sabbath, not vice versa. Thus, in modernity, Sunday has become a day of recreation, just as work has also been functionalised with the consequence that in an exhausted society, work and leisure are increasingly segregated.

A theology of work and a theology of the Sabbath fundamentally belong together. In their interrelatedness, the meaning of creation can be discovered. From the perspective of the human being, creation is participation of the human being in God’s work of creation and the possibility of a Great Transformation. Man holds on to the hope of shaping the world within the limits of planet Earth and using its possibilities in such a way that the network of life on Earth can be renewed and a “good life” becomes possible for future generations.

3.2 Loving and working

Theological work on creation reminds us above all that creation is a “granting, disposal, promise and provision of what is necessary for life and living together in a comprehensive dimension,”^[47] as stated in the document of the Commission for Social and Societal Questions of the German Bishops’ Conference “Handeln für die Zukunft der Schöpfung” (“Acting for the Future of Creation”). This text elaborates on the importance of “co-creativity.” The actions of human beings and their work are em-

bedded in the network of creation and are at its service. At times when these nets are torn, when the rainforests necessary for the earth's ecosystem continue to be cut down despite all pleas to the contrary, when newly fanned wars stymie the struggle for sustainable economic activity, the above words, though well-intentioned, seem ineffective.

Yet we must hope against all hope. The meaning of the Jewish Sabbath is trust "in spite of everything." This is also true of the Christian Sunday, which for Christians took the place of the Jewish day of rest after its official recognition as a Christian holiday with the legislation of Emperor Constantine in 321. In recent decades, with the intensification of Christian-Jewish dialogue, these two days, while retaining their intrinsic value, have come to be seen as „festival(s) of creation."^[48] "The Sabbath is not a human invention, but part of the divine order of creation and therefore inherent to the world as a whole. The entire cosmos is subject to the rhythm of God's resting on the seventh day of creation."^[49]

The Sabbath commandment, as it is named in the biblical texts Ex 20:9-11 and Ex 31:15,17 admonishes humans to interrupt work in order to "take a breather," as Norbert Clemens Baumgart writes in his intertextual analysis,^[50] referring back to the connection between the commandment to rest valid for humans, animals, slaves and strangers and the creation narrative, which speaks of God resting on the

seventh day "after he had made all his work" (Gen 2:2).^[51] This is echoed in Deut 5:12, which reads, "Observe the Sabbath day, to keep it holy, as the Lord your God commanded you."

The Sabbath commandment commits human beings to an "imitatio Dei,"^[52] to resting, as God did, on the seventh day. It stands for the fact that work and distancing oneself from work belong together, that the limits set for work in the Sabbath commandment do not "confine" it but rather release its creative powers.

The biblical mandate to work in and on creation is to be interpreted in terms of a mapping of 'divine working.' The Sabbath rest sets limits to man's relationship to the world, which is oriented towards work and thus towards creation and change. It provides a free space in which he can orient himself anew to the divine model.^[53]

Work is to be related to the rhythm of creation, preservation, cultivation and rest. It is precisely the distancing from work, the ever-new relativisation of work, that allows us to discover its meaningfulness: "God has thus placed the rhythm of work and rest in his creation. Yes, the ultimate meaning of his work of creation is not work and the struggle for survival, but the possibility for all living beings to 'catch their breath' (Ex 23:12)."^[54] Life in abundance, understood as quality of life, is thus the meaning and purpose of the day of rest. The Sabbath is not just one of the seven days, but is understood in Gen 1:1-2:4a

as the ‘crowning’ and goal of the whole work of creation. In this sense, it is not man who is the “crown” of creation, but the Sabbath. When man keeps the Sabbath, he shares in the “crowning” by growing into what God has planned for him from the beginning, by becoming an “image” of God able to participate in the transformation of creation according to this dignity.

In exegetical literature, there have been many interpretations of the aforementioned “crowning” or “completion” of creation on the seventh day. Erich Zenger speaks of the “completion of creation” as a “further act of God’s creation in that God ‘blesses’ and ‘sanctifies’ the seventh day on which he ceases to work.”^[55] Baumgart and Krüger speak of “God resting” and “God ceasing,” which is not part of the act of creation, but occurs in the time after the completion of creation; the work is “brought to an end,” it is “finished.”^[56] The special feature of this day is that the “day of cessation” is

directly identified as God’s object, as the object of his action (Gen 2:3a). God blesses the seventh day and thus gives it continuity. The blessing is to be understood in unity with God’s ‘sanctifying’. God sanctifies this seventh day and assigns it to himself continuously. In this way, God appears as the “rhythemiser” of that time which he himself, as Creator, has made possible.^[57]

And in this manner Gen 1-2, according to Baumgart,

foreshadows the later mentions of creation in Ex 20 and Ex 31, which deal with the week and the Sabbath, and thus suggests a prior understanding to them. According to this, the Creator, in creating the cosmos, was not subject to externally predetermined time sequences, and therefore followed them. Rather, the Creator himself laid the foundation for and shaped the week with its extraordinary day. In its temporal behaviour, Israel thus imitates God’s creative timing.^[58]

Thus, “God’s cessation of ‘his’ work” is “under the sign of its completion after the completion of creation.”^[59] In Jewish tradition, the Sabbath has therefore been designated as a day “that is not a day,” a day, according to Rabbi Ishmael commenting on Exodus 20, that is “equal in significance to the whole work of creation.”^[60] The people are called upon to prepare themselves to receive Queen Shabbat.^[61]

The Sabbath, according to the interpretation of the French theologian and exegete Jean-Robert Armogathe, who also makes reference to Jewish traditions, “is the presence of God that communicates itself to human beings, it is only another name for Emmanuel, for ‘God is with us.’”^[62] In the New Testament, this very God-perspective of the Sabbath is recalled when Jesus of Nazareth approaches the Sabbath critically, asking whether it is “lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do harm, to save life or to kill” (Mk 3:4), and when he, after having been challenged for his dis-

ciples' plucking ears of corn on the Sabbath, says: "I tell you, something greater than the temple is here... For the Son of Man is lord of the Sabbath" (Mt 12:6.8). The Sabbath is theocentric in this sense, because it is a day on which the Creator himself is central, and not one of his works. Space is made for Him and for the dynamics of the transformation of His creative power. At the same time, the Sabbath is also deeply anthropocentric, because the Sabbath commandment "humanises" human work and embeds it in the living network of creation. Thus the Sabbath is an "in-between" space and "the first act of salvation history," according to the French Old Testament scholar Roland de Vaux. When creation is "completed, God stops and can make a covenant with his creatures... The 'in-between' of the covenant of creation is the Sabbath kept by man (cf. Ez 20:12) in the image of the first Sabbath of the world, on which God rested."^[63] For this very reason, the dynamics of transformation are inscribed in the Sabbath, in which human beings, when they prepare themselves for Queen Shabbat welcome her, become participants.

From a Christian perspective, Sunday is the "Lord's Day" in precisely this sense. In the Christian community, Jesus of Nazareth, the Christ, is understood as the mediator, the "in-between" space where God and man meet in an unsurpassable closeness, a closeness in which every man and woman following in the footsteps of Jesus receives a share.

This Jesus, who was crucified on Friday, the preparation day, and rested in the tomb during the Sabbath of Holy Saturday, God raised up on the third day "according to the Scriptures." On this great and holy Sabbath Christ, 'obedient to the will of the Father, in the Holy Spirit by his death gave life to the world.' He fulfilled all the promises of God contained in Scripture.^[64]

Radical transformation is the ground of the Christian hope that, despite infernos, floods and wars, forces for the Great Transformation can build and grow after all. This hope is rooted in the resurrection of Jesus "on the third day" (1 Cor 15:4), the day in whose memory the Christian community continues to celebrate Sunday. In Jesus Christ, according to Paul (e.g. 2 Cor 5:17),^[65] a new creation has taken place, i.e. an ultimately inconceivable and unsurpassable transformation of all reality, which is "foolishness" for those who seek to understand with their human intellect, but reason for hope for those who walk in faith (cf. 1 Cor 1:18, 22-24).^[66] Christians therefore celebrate Sunday as Creation Day, as a reminder of this new creation, but they do well also to remember the Jewish Sabbath and to keep in mind that Jesus himself honoured it with his whole life and in his death. The Sabbath, as Kurt Appel summarises his interpretation of it, is the place of the Messiah and ... the place where GOD happens in history, and indeed as its Sabbath, as eschatological time, i.e. as the "hour" in which the activity of man

freed from guilt and mortal disease is transformed into praise and celebration. ... It is the 'hour' in which the reconciling and healing new creation takes place as a feast and in which the festive origin of the world becomes manifest.^[67]

4. A Brief Conclusion: The Sabbath as a Day of Transformation

The environmental crisis, climate change and depletion of resources call for a Great Transformation. The Earth Charter published in 2000 speaks of a "new beginning," a "time when a new reverence for life was awakened, a time when sustainable development was resolutely set in motion, a time when the quest for justice and peace was given new impetus, and a time of joyful celebration of life."^[68] In many movements around the world, across religions and cultures, and especially in the minds and hearts of young people, there has been a growing awareness of the need to adopt a new attitude towards life and the whole of creation, a "basic attitude of transcending oneself by breaking through closed-off consciousness and self-centredness" (LS 208). This is an attitude of "solidarity, cooperation and compassion," as Leonardo Boff writes, a new age "in which we no longer presume to be 'little gods' on earth, but simply human beings who regard and treat the other members of the

community of life related to us, the plants, the birds, the animals, the moon, the sun and the stars, simply as brothers and sisters."^[69] From the perspective of the biblical traditions, this new spirituality is a "creation spirituality," the basic form of spirituality that unites people of all religions and cultures. This is why Christians can celebrate Creation Day, one of the new ecumenical projects born in response to the radical crisis of the present, with all people of good will, thereby allowing the great treasure of our biblical traditions to shine anew in a secular context.

In the Sabbath and in Sunday, we find a foundational "spirituality," the basic attitude of "transcending oneself," the experience of being related in spirit to the whole of creation. Sabbath and Sunday remind us of the whence and whither of creation, of the inner, creative dynamism of God and the powers of transformation he has inscribed in reality. They remind us of God's blessing and call us to praise God, the Creator. The Sabbath calls our attention to our participation in creation, our co-creative activity with regard to the transformation of reality according to the original goodness placed in creation. In this respect, the Sabbath represents the horizon that makes possible a healthy attitude to work and allows for criticism of all forms of work that are unworthy of human beings. Work becomes a "relative" concept without being relativised; rather, it reaches its most profound "reality" when embedded in the dynamics of transformation

that Sabbath or Sunday signify. Work thus attains the deepest “relation to reality” and “enracinement dans le monde.” As Simone Weil puts it: “Une civilisation constituée par une spiritualité du travail serait le plus haut degré d’enracinement de l’homme dans l’univers, par suite l’opposé de l’état où nous sommes, qui consiste en un déracinement presque total.”^[70] When work and rest, the interruption of work and praise of the Creator, are related to each other, human beings, to take up Simone Weil’s metaphor, become rooted, finding their footing in and on the earth and experience that they are “earthlings” and part of the living network of creation.

To understand and to grasp that the human being is an “earthling” embedded in the great network of creation is an act of consciousness based in the truth that man is an “image” of God, that he is a being consisting of a body and a soul, and that he has and is spirit. And it is precisely this spirit, as Leonardo Boff puts it, that is the “profound dimension of the human individual,” “the most secret and sacred, the realm from which the great conflicts spring, where serious decisions are made and where the fuller meaning of life is defined.”^[71] This spirit is “the capacity for relationship and interconnection, in which all forms of being are interconnected,” and this “cosmic spirit, the relational matrix, attains consciousness in the individual, and therefore it can shape history and lay the foundations for a design of life that has the hallmark of spirit.”^[72] When

the Sabbath is celebrated in this spirit, it becomes the supreme expression and culmination of the fact that man is an embodied spirit. Herein lies – as justified by the biblical texts – the condition for human beings to embark on the path of a Great Transformation, because their power for transformation is grounded in the dynamics of transformation that is not man-made but divine.

Christians in the many movements around the world in the service of sustainability, the integrity of creation, and the future of the planet bring their creation spirituality to the task of shaping a comprehensive spirituality. Creation spirituality finds its deepest expression in the celebration of the Sabbath, which in this sense is not only celebrated as the seventh day of the week but is inscribed in the dynamics of every day as a day of transformation and creation. In the Christian liturgy, the celebration of the Eucharist on weekdays is a reminder of this truth. The Sabbath, writes Kurt Appel,

is therefore the eschatological day that is not simply added, but crosses the other days, as it were, which, incidentally, was expressed before the last liturgical reform insofar as in it every day held within itself, as it were, the possibility of Sunday service. The Sabbath of the seventh day, as God’s day, consequently enters into the centre of Israel and becomes the primordial sacrament in which the Torah itself is summed up. Thus the Sabbath can be seen as the portal through which Messianic time enters world time.^[73]

Thus the Sabbath, like Sunday, “is not a day external to the other days, but their transformation from the necessity of the course of the world into the freedom of the feast. It is, as it were, the end of the self-referentiality of the other days, without being a goal different and external to them.”⁷⁴

The possibility of transformation is inherent in the day of creation, the Sabbath or Sunday, on which people, in line with biblical tradi-

tion, open an “interspace” for the dynamics of God’s transformative powers, for the new creation that takes place in the becoming of the world at every moment. Human beings participate in this transformation by their work, realising themselves in the process as human beings in community with other human beings and with the whole network of creation. From a Christian perspective, this is why we can hold on to hope as we await and work towards the Great Transformation.

- ^[1] Otilia Lukács, *Sabbath in the Making: A Study of the Inner-biblical Interpretation of the Sabbath Commandment. Contributions to Biblical Exegesis & Theology*, 97 (Leuven: Peeters, 2020). <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv1q26m4t>
- ^[2] Lukács, *Sabbath in the Making*, 42. <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv1q26m4t.3>
- ^[3] Cf. *only the theological interpretation of the Sabbath and jubilee in Uwe Becker, Sabbath und Sonntag: Plädoyer für eine sabbattheologisch begründete kirchliche Zeitpolitik* (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 2006), 249–276, p. 264. Creation-theological and liberation-theological perspectives are also combined in Andreas Benk, *Schöpfung – eine Vision von Gerechtigkeit: Was niemals war, doch möglich ist* (Ostfildern: Grünewald, 2016).
- ^[4] *On Jesus' position on the Sabbath according to the testimony of the Gospels, see Ernst Haag, Vom Sabbat zum Sonntag. Eine bibeltheologische Studie* (Trier: Paulinus-Verlag, 1991), 125–137.
- ^[5] *The relationship between Sabbath and Sunday is not fleshed out in the present study from a historical perspective; the connection has previously been firmly established. Sabbath and Sunday are examined from a creation-theological perspective under the aspect of „transformation“; from there, the focus is on commonalities without relativising the differences. In this respect, the important christological perspective of Sunday is not illuminated here.*
- ^[6] Otilia Lukács joins the interpreters who define the Sabbath as an “identity marker.” She speaks of “... the role of the Sabbath as means of identity formation, that is, a contextual reading that attempts to present the group who developed the Sabbath as their identity marker” (*Sabbath in the Making*, 40). This interpretation is found, for example, in the habilitation thesis by Alexandra Grund, *Die Entstehung des Sabbats. Seine Bedeutung für Israels Zeitkonzept und Erinnerungskultur*, (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011), 5, 306.
- ^[7] Lukács, *Sabbath in the Making*, 3.
- ^[8] Lukács, *Sabbath in the Making*, 296.
- ^[9] Lukács, *Sabbath in the Making*, 17.
- ^[10] Cf. Markus Vogt, “Kirche und Große Transformation: Blockierte Potenziale – sieben Thesen zur Rolle der Kirchen in der Großen Transformation,” *KirUm-Infodienst*, no. 1 (2019): 4–7; Adrián E. Beling and Julien Vanhulst (eds.), *Desarrollo non Sancto: La religión como actor emergente en el debate global sobre el futuro del planeta*, (Ciudad de México: siglo veintiuno editores, 2019).
- ^[11] Cf. Augustine, *La Genèse au sens littéral en douze livres, Bibliothèque augustinienne*, 48 (Paris: Institut d'études Augustiniennes, 1972), 307: “It can be said with all probability that the observance of the Sabbath was prescribed for the Jews as a shadowy image of the future: it was a foreshadowing of the spiritual rest which God, following the example of his own rest, promised to the faithful who perform good works, under the mystery of the sign. A rest whose mystery was confirmed by the Lord Jesus Christ, who suffered because he willed it, through his burial. For he rested in the sepulchre on the Sabbath: he spent that day in a kind of holy rest, having completed his week on the sixth day, which was the preparation day, and having accomplished at the wood of the cross what the scriptures had said of him” (IV, XI, 21). Quoted from: Michel Sales, “Die Vollendung des Sabbats: Vom Siebten Tag zur Gottesruhe in Gott,” *Internationale katholische Zeitschrift “Communio”* IKaZ 23, no. 1 (1994): 9–25, p. 14.
- ^[12] Adam Joshua Heschel, *Der Sabbat: Seine Bedeutung für den heutigen Menschen* (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1990), (English original edition: 1951), 10.
- ^[13] Jan Oliva, „Ein Tag für das Leben: Vom Sabbat und seiner heilsamen Zweckfreiheit,” *Geist und Leben. Zeitschrift für christliche Spiritualität* 91, no. 1 (2018): 39–44. Jan Oliva refers to the Sabbath liturgy and the hymn „Lecha dodi,” which says: „Up, my friend, to the bride, / The Queen Sabbath let us receive!” (39).
- ^[14] Pope Francis, *Encyclical Letter on Care for our Common Home, Laudato Si'*, 2015, edited by the Secretariat of the German Bishops' Conference, Bonn (Bonn: Sekretariat der Deutschen Bischofskonferenz/ Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2015), no. 216-221.
- ^[15] Leonardo Boff, *Überlebenswichtig: Warum wir einen Kurswechsel zu echter Nachhaltigkeit brauchen*, (Ostfildern: Grünewald 2016), 81. – Román Guridi elaborates on the developments in Latin American eco-theology: Román Guridi, *Ecoteología: hacia un nuevo estilo de vida* (Santiago de Chile: Ediciones Universidad Alberto Hurtado 2018).
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- ^[16] See, e.g., Johan Rockström and Mattias Klum, *Big World, Small Planet: Abundance Within Planetary Boundaries* (Connecticut: New Haven, 2015)
- ^[17] Bruno Latour, “Sur une nette inversion du schème de la fin des temps,” (*ET: On a clear inversion of the end-times scheme*), *Recherches de Science Religieuse* 107, no. 4 (2019): 601–615. <https://doi.org/10.3917/rsr.194.0601> Bruno Latour, *Où atterrir: Comment s’orienter en politique* (Paris: La Découverte, 2017). (For this article the German edition was used: Bruno Latour, *Das terrestrische Manifest* [Berlin: Suhrkamp, 2018].)
- ^[18] Boff, *Überlebenswichtig*, 90–91. Boff refers to the Brazilian scientist José Lutzenberger, who further developed the Gaia hypothesis: Gaia is an “evolving system consisting of all living things and their surface environment, the oceans, the atmosphere, the crustal rocks... a system that has emerged from the common and mutual evolution of organisms and their environment in the course of the evolutionary ages of life on earth... In dialogue with the energies of the universe and the earth, and in interaction with the other living organisms, these have created for themselves a habitat, a habitat favourable to the maintenance of relatively constant conditions for all the elements which constitute life” (90).
- ^[19] Boff, *Überlebenswichtig*, 90.
- ^[20] Bruno Latour, *Wo bin ich? Lektionen aus dem Lockdown* (Berlin: Suhrkamp, 2021).
- ^[21] Latour, *Wo bin ich?*, 165.
- ^[22] Latour, *Wo bin ich?*, 167.
- ^[23] Latour, *Wo bin ich?*, 168.
- ^[24] Latour, *Wo bin ich?*, 172.
- ^[25] Cf. Markus Vogt, *Ökotheologie: Was ist die Kompetenz der Theologie im Umweltdiskurs? Book presentation „Christliche Umweltethik“ on 15.4.2021, 1, August 11, 2022*, https://www.kaththeol.unimuenchen.de/lehrstuehle/christl_sozaletik/aktuelles-ordner/umweltethik/okotheologie.pdf.
- ^[26] Boff, *Überlebenswichtig*, 81.
- ^[27] Boff, *Überlebenswichtig*, 82.
- ^[28] Boff, *Überlebenswichtig*, 82.
- ^[29] Boff, *Überlebenswichtig*, 83.
- ^[30] Boff, *Überlebenswichtig*, 83.
- ^[31] Boff, *Überlebenswichtig*, 83.
- ^[32] Sallie McFague, *Models of God: Theology for an Ecological Nuclear Age*, (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987), 77; Margit Eckholt, *Schöpfungstheologie und Schöpfungsspiritualität: Ein Blick auf die Theologin Sallie McFague*, (München: Don Bosco 2009).
- ^[33] Boff, *Überlebenswichtig*, 83.
- ^[34] Boff, *Überlebenswichtig*, 83. Boff refers to considerations of the cosmologist Brian Swimme.
- ^[35] Boff, *Überlebenswichtig*, 100.
- ^[36] Boff, *Überlebenswichtig*, 100. It is about the sustainable continuation of life in its most diverse forms, so as “preserving natural capital by giving it breathing space to regain its equilibrium and restore its lost integrity.”
- ^[37] Dorothee Sölle, *Lieben und arbeiten: Eine Theologie der Schöpfung* (München 2001).
- ^[38] Pope John Paul II., *Encyclical on Human Work, Laborem Exercens*, 1981 (*Der Wert der Arbeit und der Weg zur Gerechtigkeit. Die Enzyklika über die menschliche Arbeit Papst Johannes Pauls II. Mit einem Kommentar von Oswald von Nell-Breuning*), 2nd ed., (Freiburg/Basel/Wien: Herder, 1981) (abbreviated: LE). Cf. Dietmar Mieth, *Arbeit und Menschen-würde* (Freiburg/Basel/Wien: Herder, 1985).
- ^[39] Cf. *Laborem Exercens* 9, “Work is a good for man – for his being human – because through work he not only transforms nature and adapts it to his needs, but also realises himself as a human being, in the certain manner of “becoming more human.”
- ^[40] Marie-Dominique Chenu, *Die Arbeit und der göttliche Kosmos: Versuch einer Theologie der Arbeit. Trans. and Intro. by Karl Schmitt* (Mainz: Matthias-Grünewald-Verlag, 1956), 59.

- ^[41] Chenu, *Die Arbeit und der göttliche Kosmos*, 71.
- ^[42] Cf. Sölle, *Lieben und arbeiten*, 142: "Through work we enter into relationship with other people; in work, therefore, this relational character of our existence should find expression. If we have a share in creation and imitate God in our work, then our creation is also a sign of our relatedness to others and our commonality. Work that truly corresponds to who we are allows us to participate in God's work of creation and brings us into a continuous process of mutual give and take, teaching and learning that is characteristic of good work."
- ^[43] Chenu, *Die Arbeit und der göttliche Kosmos*, 69. Cf. Sölle, *Lieben und arbeiten*, 57: "The workers continue the power of God on earth and collaborate in creation."
- ^[44] Chenu, *Die Arbeit und der göttliche Kosmos*, 69.
- ^[45] Sölle, *Lieben und Arbeiten*, 13.
- ^[46] Sölle, *Lieben und Arbeiten*, 139.
- ^[47] *Handeln für die Zukunft der Schöpfung* (22.10.1998), ed. by Sekretariat der Deutschen Bischofskonferenz (*Die deutschen Bischöfe – Kommission für gesellschaftliche und soziale Fragen* 19, Bonn 1998), no. 62, 36.
- ^[48] Matthias Klinghardt, "'... auf daß du den Feiertag heiligest': Sabbath und Sonntag im Antiken Judentum und frühen Christentum." In Jan Assmann (ed.), *Das Fest und das Heilige. Religiöse Kontrapunkte zur Alltagswelt* (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 1991), 206–233, here: 210. –To the relation between Sabbath and Sunday, cf. Ernst Haag, *Vom Sabbat zum Sonntag: Eine bibeltheologische Studie* (Trier: Paulinus-Verlag, 1991). Haag points out that the reference to the "rest" of the Sabbath and thus a theological discussion of the Sabbath had an eschatological perspective: Sabbath rest is understood as "the memorial of the completion of God's rule as Creator and Redeemer" (181).
- ^[49] Klinghardt, '... auf daß du den Feiertag heiligest', 210.
- ^[50] Norbert Clemens Baumgart, "Ein Gott, der Atem gibt: Zu intertextuellen Zusammenhängen im Pentateuch," *Biblische Notizen. Aktuelle Beiträge zur Exegese der Bibel und ihrer Welt* 143, (2009): 46–68, p. 49. Here Baumgart also refers to 2 Sam 16:14: David flees with his people and they "refresh" (*ibid.*) themselves, or, as it says in a common German Bible interpretation, the "Einheitsübersetzung," they "take a breather." The "resting" in Ex 31:17 is for him also a "taking a breather," a "coming back to breath" (*ibid.*).
- ^[51] Gen 1: 2a, b; 3 a "Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. And on the seventh day God finished his work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all his work that he had done. So God blessed the seventh day and made it holy."
- ^[52] Baumgart, *Ein Gott, der Atem gibt*, 61: "Intertextually read from Ex 20:11, one can hear an imitatio dei in Deut 5:14. A rest similar to that of the Creator is to be accomplished once again in Israel."
- ^[53] *Handeln für die Zukunft der Schöpfung*, no. 68, 39. Cf. also: Thomas Eggensperger, "Freizeit und Schöpfung: Vom Wandel der Zeiten," in Thomas Dienberg and Stephan Winter (eds.), *Mit Sorge – in Hoffnung: Zu Impulsen aus der Enzyklika Laudato si' für eine Spiritualität im ökologischen Zeitalter* (Regensburg: Verlag Pustet, 2020), 207–217.
- ^[54] Michael Rosenberger, *Im Zeichen des Lebensbaumes: Ein theologisches Lexikon der christlichen Schöpfungspiritualität* (Würzburg: Verlag Echter, 2001), 106; 107.
- ^[55] Erich Zenger (ed.), *Stuttgarter Altes Testament. Einheitsübersetzung mit Kommentar und Lexikon* (Stuttgart: Verlag katholisches Bibelwerk, 2004), 19. Quoted in: Thomas Krüger, "Schöpfung und Sabbat in Genesis 2,1-3," in *Sprachen – Bilder – Klänge: Dimensionen der Theologie im Alten Testament und in seinem Umfeld. Festschrift für Rüdiger Bartelmus zu seinem 65. Geburtstag* (*Alter Orient und Altes Testament. Veröffentlichungen zur Kultur und Geschichte des Alten Orients und des Alten Testaments* Vol. 359), ed. by Christiane Karrer-Grube/ Jutta Krispenz/Thomas Krüger/Christian Rose/Annette Schellenberg (Münster: Ugarit, 2009), 155–169, p. 159.
- ^[56] Krüger, *Schöpfung und Sabbat in Genesis 2,1-3*, 159.
- ^[57] Norbert Clemens Baumgart, "Ein Gott, der Atem gibt: Zu intertextuellen Zusammenhängen im Pentateuch," *Biblische Notizen. Aktuelle Beiträge zur Exegese der Bibel und ihrer Welt* 143, (2009): 46–68, p. 56.
- ^[58] Baumgart, *Ein Gott, der Atem gibt*, 56.

- ^[59] Baumgart, *Ein Gott, der Atem gibt*, 57.
- ^[60] Quoted in: Jean-Robert Armogathe/Olivier Boulnois, "Am Sabbat ist Gott unter den Menschen," in *Internationale katholische Zeitschrift "Communio" IKaZ 23, no. 1 (1994): 2-25, p. 5.*
- ^[61] In his essay, Jan Oliva presents Abraham Joshua Heschel's important reflections on the Sabbath: *The Sabbath: Its Meaning for Contemporary Man* (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1990) (original English edition: 1951). The Sabbath is described by Heschel as a "palace in time that we build" (Heschel, *The Sabbath*, 13; quoted from: Oliva, *Ein Tag für das Leben*, 44). The Sabbath is "a reminder of both worlds – this world and the world to come (...). For the Sabbath is joy, holiness and rest; joy is a part of this world, holiness and rest belong to the world to come." (Heschel, "The Sabbath", 18. Quoted in: Oliva, *Ein Tag für das Leben*, 44.) For more on the Queen Shabbat, see footnote 13.
- ^[62] Armogathe/Boulnois, *Am Sabbat ist Gott unter den Menschen*, 6; 7.
- ^[63] Roland de Vaux, *Les institutions de l' Ancien Testament, II* (Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1960), 380, quoted in: Michel Sales, "Die Vollendung des Sabbats. Vom Siebten Tag zur Gottesruhe in Gott," *Internationale katholische Zeitschrift "Communio" IKaZ 23, no. 1, (1994): 9-25, p. 13.*
- ^[64] Sales, *Die Vollendung des Sabbats*, 22.
- ^[65] 2Cor 5:17: "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come."
- ^[66] "For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God" (1 Cor 1:18). "...but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God" (1 Cor 1:23-24).
- ^[67] Kurt Appel, "Das Fest, der Sabbat und die Ankunft des Messias unter Aufnahme einiger Gedanken Giorgio Agambens," *Internationale Katholische Zeitschrift "Communio" IKaZ 40, no. 2 (2011): 138-144, p. 140.*
- ^[68] "Die Erd-Charta," August 11, 2022, <https://erdcharta.de/die-erd-charta/der-text/>. Quoted in: Papst Franziskus, *Laudato si'*, Nr. 207.
- ^[69] Boff, *Überlebenswichtig*, 149.
- ^[70] Simone Weil, *Enracinement* (Paris: Gallimard, 1962), 128-129. (New editions: 1977, 1990).
- ^[71] Boff, *Überlebenswichtig*, 155.
- ^[72] *Ibid.*
- ^[73] Appel, "Das Fest, der Sabbat und die Ankunft des Messias," 139: The Christological references cannot be further developed within the framework of the present considerations. When in the Gospel of Saint John Jesus is designated as a "door" (Jn 10:9) or when "rest" (Mt 11:29) is mentioned in relation to Jesus, these are intertextual references to the Jewish Sabbath.
- ^[74] Appel, "Das Fest, der Sabbat und die Ankunft des Messias," 143: The references to the celebration of the Eucharist cannot be developed further. A central theological moment of "transformation" is the transubstantiation of the gifts of bread and wine, fruits of human labour, into the Eucharistic species whose reception gives people a share in the dynamics of God's transformation. Appel points out that if the Sabbath is to become a "real feast," "the work that lies resolved in the Eucharistic species must be transformed into the rest of HIS presence." On the other hand, the sixth day of the biblical work of creation gives man the task of continuing the divine work of creation as a statue of God. This creative activity, however, only comes to its inner completion in the festive structure of the seventh day" (143).