Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. And on the seventh day God finished his work which he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had done. So God blessed the seventh day and hallowed it, because on it God rested from all his work which he had done in creation (Gen 2:1-3).

Be still, and know that I am God... (Ps 46:10)

We work in order to be at leisure (Aristotle).

The reason why the philosopher can be compared to the poet is that both are concerned with wonder... (St. Thomas Aquinas)

I have discovered that all human misfortune comes from one thing, which is not knowing how to remain quietly in one room (Blaise Pascal).

The innermost meaning of this over-emphasis on effort appears to be this: that man mistrusts everything that is without effort; that in good conscience he can own only what he himself has reached through painful effort; that he refuses to let himself be given anything.

Is there still an area of human action, or human existence as such, that does not have its justification by being part of the machinery of a “five-year plan”?

Leisure is...an inner absence of preoccupation, a calm, an ability to let things go, to be quiet.

Leisure is...the condition of considering things in a celebrating spirit...Leisure is only possible in the assumption that man is not only in harmony with himself...but also that he is in agreement with the world and its meaning.

[Leisure is not there for the sake of work...[The power to be at leisure is the power to step beyond the working world...

When separated from worship, leisure becomes toilsome, and work becomes in human.

[T]he cultus [worship], now as in the distant past, is the primary source of man's freedom, independence, and immunity within society. Suppress that last sphere of freedom, and freedom itself, and all our liberties, will in the end vanish into thin air.
It is in this very aspect of the liturgy [i.e. its playfulness] that its didactic aim is to be found, that of teaching the soul not to see purposes everywhere, not to be too conscious of the end it wishes to attain, not to be desirous of being over clever and grown-up, but to understand simplicity in life. The soul must learn to abandon, at least in prayer, the restlessness of purposeful activity; it must learn to waste time for the sake of God, and to be prepared for the sacred game with sayings and thoughts and gestures, without always immediately asking "why?" and "wherefore?" It must learn not to be continually yearning to do something, to attack something, to accomplish something useful, but to play the divinely ordained game of the liturgy in liberty and beauty and holy joy before God.

In the end, eternal life will be its fulfillment. Will the people who do not understand the liturgy be pleased to find that the heavenly consummation is an eternal song of praise? Will they not rather associate themselves with those other industrious people who consider that such an eternity will be both boring and unprofitable?

A short bibliography:

*Dies Domini*
St. John Paul II

*The Abolition of Man*
C. S. Lewis

*The Noonday Devil: Acedia, the Unnamed Evil of our Times*
Jean-Charles Nault, OSB
Ignatius Press

*Fighting the Noonday Devil*
R. R. Reno
*First Things*
August 2003