

# **LOOKING TO SUNDAY®**

**Sunday, January 11, 2015**

This email, entitled Looking to Sunday®, focuses on the Gospel Reading for the coming Sunday. It prepares readers to hear God's Word at Mass and it offers a point of reflection to consider in the days leading to Sunday. Looking to Sunday is written by Father Tom Iwanowski.

## **BELOVED WORDS**

There are certain words that make us feel affirmed, appreciated, and loved – words that inspire us to strive even harder to do the best we can in life.

A teacher hears such words when a graduate returns and declares, "I want to be a teacher, a teacher who inspires kids like you inspired me."

A politician hears such words when a voter comments, "You're a good leader, I'm glad I voted for you."

An employee hears such words when the boss remarks, "You did a super job on that presentation. You're a real asset to the company."

A parent hears such words when a child says, "I'm so lucky to have you in my life. When I grow up I want to be a Mom/a Dad just like you."

But of all the positive, affirming, loving words we can hear, the ones that may mean the most to us are those that come from our parents. All children, no matter their age, seek the love and approval of their parents. Children want to know that those who gave them birth and raised them are proud of the way they have turned out and of what they have accomplished. For a child to hear his or her mother or father say, "I love you, I'm proud you're my son/my daughter" – these are the words that bring the greatest joy.

In this Sunday's Gospel (Mark 1:7-11), Jesus hears such words from his heavenly Father. After being baptized by John, Jesus hears a voice from on high proclaim, "You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased."

With those words God the Father expresses his love and pride in his Son. With those words of love and affirmation ringing in his ears, and with the power of the Spirit that comes upon him, Jesus begins his public ministry.

Confident of his Father's love and pride in him, how could Jesus not be empowered and strengthened as he proclaimed that the Kingdom of God was at hand.

This Sunday as the Christmas Season concludes with the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord, its Gospel reading is also a final Christmas gift to us. For this Gospel reminds us that when we were baptized, God blessed us with his Spirit, made us part of his Church, claimed us as his beloved sons and daughters, and revealed himself as our Father.

Of all the words Jesus could hear, were there any that could give him more joy than the ones in this Sunday's Gospel? "You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased."

Those are also the words that our heavenly Father wants to speak to each of us, "You are my beloved child; with you I am well pleased."

