

LOOKING TO SUNDAY®

Sunday, January 12, 2014

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.

LONGER THAN EXPECTED

The President's State of the Union Address, the Academy Awards Show, and the fourth quarter of the Super Bowl have something in common. They all last longer than expected. That is also true of the Christmas Season. It lasts longer than most people think.

For the majority of people the Christmas Season ended on December 25. The following day was the start of the post-Christmas Season, or better yet the start of "After Christmas Sales." Even those people who observe the traditional 12 days of Christmas have already taken down their holiday decorations and put their Christmas trees out by the curb to be hauled away.

But the Church's calendar extends the Christmas Season days longer. That is the case because Christmas celebrates far more than Christ being born in Bethlehem, angels singing, and magi bearing gifts. The Christmas Season, which lasts until this Sunday's Feast of the Baptism of the Lord, celebrates our understanding of the one whose birth 2,000 years ago altered human history and changed people's understanding of God.

In the Christmas Season, the scriptures and the feasts of the Church proclaim the child of Bethlehem to be the Word made flesh, the long awaited Savior and Lord, the light of all the nations, the Son of God and the Son of Mary, and part of the Holy Family of Nazareth.

Those descriptions are summed up in the words that break forth from the heavens in Sunday's Gospel (Matthew 3:13-17) as Jesus is baptized by John. "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased."

In this beloved Son, we encounter the God of all creation, space, and time walking among his people.

In this beloved Son, we see the God of all majesty enmeshed in the joys and sorrows of everyday life.

In this beloved Son, we behold the God of all might and power made vulnerable and weak before his creatures.

Yes, like many special events the Christmas Season lasts longer than expected. But that should not be surprising. It takes time to appreciate the unexpected, wonderful things God did in sending his beloved Son to live among us!

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