

# **LOOKING TO SUNDAY®**

**Sunday, January 12, 2020**

***The Baptism of the Lord***

This email, entitled Looking to Sunday®, focuses on one or more of the scripture readings 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.

Looking to Sunday has been published for more than eleven years.

## **RELATABLE**

When individuals run for national office, they try their best to relate to the people whose votes they are seeking. They do not want to be thought of as being aloof, out of touch, or elitist.

When giving a speech, candidates for office will be sure to mention the top concerns of the voters. Those candidates want to be seen as sharing those concerns and ready to address them.

While campaigning in a particular state, office seekers will praise that "great state", and of course they will reference its winning sports teams, its main industries, and its wonderful, hard-working people.

When visiting ethnic neighborhoods, those running for election will be sure to sample the local delicacies, participate in cultural traditions, and speak at least a few words of the group's first language.

All candidates realize that if they want people to listen to them, to put their trust in them, to vote for them, they need to be seen as relatable, approachable, and concerned.

Jesus our Lord and Savior took a similar approach. When he came among his people to proclaim the Gospel and to announce that the Kingdom of God was at hand, he did not come in power and majesty as some unapproachable being from on high. He came as one of the people.

We see that in the feasts of this Christmas Season.

The Son of God is born not in a palace, but in a lowly stable. His birth is first recognized by simple shepherds and ignored by high ranking religious leaders and seen as a threat to the politically elite.

When he receives precious gifts from the magi, those gifts do not change his social status or that of his family. He continues to be known as the son of Mary and Joseph, members of the common people of the day.

He and his family follow the same religious prescriptions and rituals as the rest of the Chosen People. As an infant he is circumcised and then presented in the Temple. He is treated like any other Jewish boy of his day.

In this Sunday's Gospel (Matthew 3:13-17), we once again see Jesus seeking to identify with his people. We are told that "Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan to be baptized by him."

While theologians speculate why Jesus, the sinless one, came to be baptized, perhaps the reason is simply this. Jesus wanted to identify with sinners.

He wanted to relate to his fellow Jews who were turning from sin and anticipating the arrival of the Messiah. So, like them, Jesus goes down into the water and is baptized.

Associating with the common people and sharing their lives is something that Jesus did throughout his ministry. As the religious elite asked his disciples, "Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?" (Matthew 9:11)

As this Christmas Season comes to an end with Sunday's Feast of the Baptism of the Lord, we are given another example of our God humbling himself in order to be one with his people.

God is not aloof, distant, and beyond us, God is with us. He became one of us. He is "Emmanuel."

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