

LOOKING TO SUNDAY®

Sunday, January 20, 2019

The Second Sunday in Ordinary Time

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 ten years.

ON THE GUEST LIST

When you plan a party, there are certain things you have to do.

You need to pick a date and time for the event.

You need to select a venue.

You need to choose the food and the drinks you will be serving.

You need to decide if there will be music and if so, will you hire a DJ or a live band?

And you need to make out a guest list. That decision is the most important of all. The right mix of people is the critical ingredient for any successful party.

You can have beer and burgers in your garage and if you have invited happy, friendly people, the party will likely be terrific. But the opposite can also be true. You can have gourmet food, fine wine, outstanding music, and an amazing venue, but if you have unhappy, nasty, critical people among your guests, the event can turn out to be a disaster.

Guests can make or break a party.

If you were planning a party, and Jesus was still walking this earth, would you put him on your guest list?

Certainly, we have no problem meeting Jesus in church or when we speak to him in prayer, but would we want Jesus among our guests at a birthday party, a bachelor party, a wedding reception, an anniversary celebration, a sweet sixteen party, or a Super Bowl bash?

Would Jesus add life and energy to the party, or would he make people feel uncomfortable? Would people feel they had to watch their language, talk only about religious things, limit themselves to drinking soda or maybe just one glass of wine, and monitor the kind of music that was played?

Would our guests feel on edge, feel that Jesus was watching them, judging them, worried that he might strike up a conversation and question them about their lives?

In this Sunday's Gospel (John 2:1-11), we hear about a wedding reception in the town of Cana in Galilee. Mary was there and "Jesus and his disciples were also invited to the wedding." Obviously, the newlyweds and their parents had no problem inviting Jesus to the party.

If Jesus had been someone who made parties somber, stuffy affairs he would not have been invited. We also read that the party might have ended when the wine unexpectedly ran out, but Jesus kept the celebration going by changing gallons of water into choice wine.

On a theological level, that first miracle recorded in the Gospel of John reveals that Jesus himself is the “choice wine” that comes into the world to bring humanity into a new relationship with God.

On a human level, that miracle tells us that inviting Jesus into our lives brings true joy. If we do not appreciate that, the problem is not with Jesus, it is with us.

It means we do not understand the joy that comes with living as the Gospel teaches. A joy that Pope Francis beautifully pointed out in 2013 in his exhortation entitled, “The Joy of the Gospel.”

It may also mean that we are engaged in some kind of behavior that contradicts the teachings of Jesus.

The couple at Cana would tell us, if you want a great party, if you want a great life, put Jesus on your guest list. After all, we’ve been talking about their party in Cana for 2,000 years.

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