

LOOKING TO SUNDAY®

Sunday, February 2, 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.

EMPHASIS!

If an author wants to emphasize a particular point, he or she can do so in a variety of ways. The author might simply write that the next few lines are especially important so the reader should pay close attention. The author might emphasize a particular part of the text by having it printed in **boldface** or *italic*. The author might call attention to something by having a visual image of some kind accompany what he or she has written. The author might also emphasize something he or she has written by repeating it several times in different ways. Saint Luke does just that in this Sunday's Gospel (Luke 2:22-40) for the Feast of the Presentation of the Lord.

In that Gospel, which describes Mary and Joseph bringing Jesus to the Temple 40 days after his birth and their offering a sacrifice for Mary's purification, Luke notes that they acted as they did to fulfill the law.

Luke writes "according to the law of Moses, Mary and Joseph took Jesus up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord." Luke then emphasizes that point by writing that they did so because "it is written in the law of the Lord, *Every male that opens the womb shall be consecrated to the Lord.*" Luke again highlights faithfulness to the law by writing that they offered "*a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons*, in accordance with the dictate in the law of the Lord."

A few verses later, Luke writes that Simeon noticed the child Jesus in the Temple since his parents were there "to perform the custom of the law in regard to him." And finally he ends his story by writing that Joseph, Mary, and Jesus returned home "when they had fulfilled all the prescriptions of the law of the Lord."

Luke is making a point that he does not want his readers to miss. He continually emphasizes that Mary and Joseph fulfilled the law of Moses. They were faithful Jews. It was because of their faithfulness that Simeon and Anna came in contact with the Savior, and Joseph and Mary came to a deeper understanding of their child as they listened to the words spoken by Simeon and Anna.

This Gospel can remind us that as Catholics we too have certain laws, certain rules that we are expected to fulfill. Those include gathering with our fellow Catholics for Sunday Mass, receiving the Sacraments, participating in parish life, spending some time in prayer each day, and striving to live the faith we profess. Those laws are there to help us grow in our relationship with God and in our understanding of what it means to be a Christian.

In a day when many Catholics dismiss the laws of the Church, Luke's Gospel emphasizes the importance of being faithful to religious law. In fact, Luke emphasizes such faithfulness five different times in this Sunday's Gospel. Obviously that is a point that Luke does not want his readers to miss.

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