

LOOKING TO SUNDAY®

Sunday, February 5, 2017

The Fifth 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.

A CHURCH OF SALT AND LIGHT

If someone were to shake a single grain of salt onto a large bowl of popcorn there would be no discernable change in taste. A solitary grain of salt would do nothing.

If someone were to shine a flashlight through a window of a Manhattan high-rise while all the rest of the city was in total darkness, it is doubtful anyone across the Hudson River would notice. The city would still be lost in blackness.

In this Sunday's Gospel (Matthew 5:13-16), Jesus speaks of his followers being the salt of the earth and the light of the world. But when we consider the level of our talents and abilities, our responsibilities and obligations, our weaknesses and failings, we wonder how we could ever make the impact that Jesus seems to be speaking about in the reading.

Yes, a Mother Teresa of Calcutta, a Rev. Martin Luther King, a Mahatma Gandhi, or a Pope John Paul II could make such a difference. They certainly were that dramatic salt and light that affected the world, but not us, not me.

If we look at the Gospel that way, we can conclude it is meant only for the few and the extraordinary among us.

But when Jesus was speaking of being salt and light, he was not addressing the few but rather the group of disciples listening to his Sermon on the Mount. "Jesus said to his disciples: 'You are the salt of the earth....You are the light of the world.'"

We might say that Jesus was speaking those challenging words to his Church. He was commissioning his Church to flavor society with love, mercy, and compassion. He was challenging his Church to light up the world and to dispel the darkness of selfishness and sin.

As members of God's Church we are to work together with our fellow Christians to be that salt and that light. Few of us will be able to make an extraordinary impact working on our own, but working together we can make a difference.

A parish can do more than any one individual. A diocese can do more than any one parish. The worldwide Church can accomplish more than any one local diocese.

One grain of salt makes no difference, but thousands of grains shaken onto any bland dish will make it pop with flavor. One light in a single window will not light up a darkened city, but lights in thousands of windows will make that city glow.

To be the salt that flavors and the light that brings others to glorify our heavenly Father we need to work together as Church. Jesus said to his disciples, he said to his Church, "you are the salt of the earth...you are the light of the world."

