

LOOKING TO SUNDAY®

Sunday, February 8, 2015

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.

OVERLOOKED DETAILS

The Gospel stories always have more in them than we realize. That is certainly true in the Gospel passage for this Sunday. (Mark 1:29-39)

In Sunday's reading we hear how Jesus cures a woman with a fever and then is confronted by a large crowd who come seeking cures for themselves and for their relatives and friends. We also learn that Jesus goes off to a deserted place to pray, but after being interrupted he resumes his ministry.

But if we look beyond those facts, that passage has some interesting, even homey, details that add to our appreciation of the reading.

Mark writes, "Jesus entered the house of Simon and Andrew...Simon's mother-in-law lay sick with a fever." We learn that Simon (Peter) and Andrew and their families shared a house.

Simon and Andrew were brothers who not only worked together as fishermen, they also lived together. They must have had a strong and warm relationship.

We also learn that Simon (who was to become the first "pope") was a married man who must have had a cordial relationship with his in-laws since his wife's mother was staying in his home.

Perhaps she was there since she was ill. But the fact that she began to wait on them after she was cured may indicate Simon's mother-in-law lived there on a regular basis. She was comfortable in taking on the role of the hostess. She knew her way around the kitchen.

As the passage continues, we learn that in the evening the whole town gathered at the door of the house of Simon and Andrew, bringing "all who were ill or possessed by demons."

Obviously, Capernaum was a town where word got around quickly. There were no texts or tweets, but there was small town gossip. Even today that is the most effective of all social networks.

We also know those townspeople were observant Jews for they came to Jesus only "after sunset." The came at that time of the day, since as we know from preceding verses, the events described in Sunday's Gospel take place on the Sabbath. (Mark 1:21). Only when the Sabbath was over, after sunset, could they do the work of carrying the ill and possessed to Jesus.

Even though he must have wanted some rest at the end of the day, Jesus went out and responded to the needs of the people gathered outside the door of Simon and Andrew.

The next day, Jesus tried to slip away for some quiet time of prayer, but Simon and the other disciples tracked him down. "Everyone is looking for you." Obviously those disciples were excited and enthusiastic at the response Jesus was getting from the people and they wanted him to continue his successful ministry. They were on a roll!

Those details in Sunday's Gospel, details that can easily be missed, remind us that Jesus entered into the ordinariness of human life. A life in which there were loving brothers, housemates, mothers-in-law, small town gossips, people worried about their sick relatives and friends, overly enthusiastic followers, and little time for rest.

As Saint John put it, "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us."

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