

LOOKING TO SUNDAY®
Sunday, February 9, 2025
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. Looking to Sunday has been published for more than sixteen years.

RANDOM SELECTION?

If we had to choose a person to help us with a particular task, we could make that choice in one of two possible ways. We could simply pick a person at random, or we could carefully select a person to assist us.

In this Sunday's Gospel (Luke 5:1-11), we see Jesus picking a boat to use as a floating platform to teach a large crowd gathered on the shore of Lake Gennesaret. Jesus chooses a particular boat, one belonging to Simon Peter.

Did Jesus simply make a random choice, or did he have a reason for deciding to use Peter's boat?

If we only consider Sunday's Gospel passage, we might assume Jesus' choice was simply arbitrary. However, if we look at chapter four, the previous chapter of Luke's Gospel, we might conclude that Jesus deliberately reached out to Peter and chose his boat.

In that chapter, we learn that Jesus had previously met Peter. We are told that after teaching in the synagogue in Capernaum and freeing a man from a demon, Jesus "entered the house of Simon" (Luke 4:38). There Jesus was told that Simon Peter's mother-in-law was suffering from a severe fever. Jesus cured her and the woman then immediately waited on them.

Then "at sunset, all who had people sick with various diseases brought them to him. He laid his hands on each of them and cured them...At daybreak, Jesus left and went to a deserted place" (Luke 4:40, 42).

While Jesus was staying at his home, Peter witnessed the healing power of Jesus. At the same time, Jesus obviously observed Peter's interactions with his wife, mother-in-law, relatives, and neighbors. During that time, Jesus came to know something about Peter and the two must have engaged in conversation.

So, when Jesus got into Peter's boat and later told him to "put out into the deep water and lower your nets for catch," Jesus was not speaking to someone he had picked at random and spoke to for the very first time. Jesus knew who Peter was and that knowledge led Jesus to invite Peter to leave his fishing boat and become a disciple.

That may have been the case with every disciple. While Jesus might have been divinely inspired by the Holy Spirit in selecting his disciples, his choices may also have been guided by watching, listening, and observing possible candidates. If the choices of Jesus were strictly divinely inspired, we would have to conclude that perhaps the Holy Spirit made a mistake in guiding Jesus to choose Judas, the one who would betray him.

Jesus had an eye on Peter, James, John, Thomas, and the others, and what he saw, heard, and observed led him to invite them to come follow him.

We might conclude the same is true for us. We too have been chosen and called to be disciples who draw people into the net of God's Church.

God's choice of us was not random. God selected us for a reason. God must see something in us, just as Jesus saw something in Peter!

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