

LOOKING TO SUNDAY®

Sunday, February 17, 2019

The Sixth 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.

REMEMBER ACT TWO

Imagine for a moment you were at your first Broadway play. You had never gone to the theater before. You took your seat and waited excitedly for the curtain to go up and the play to begin.

As soon as the actors began performing on the stage, you were drawn into the story. You were mesmerized by what was taking place before you.

After a period of time, the curtain came down. You saw people start to leave their seats and you did too. You assumed the performance was over.

The play seemed to end abruptly but you thought that perhaps the author intended to leave the audience wanting more or maybe the playwright wanted those who had been watching the performance to complete the story for themselves.

You went home without realizing that the play was actually not over. What you thought was the end was only the intermission. Act one was concluded but act two was yet to come.

When it comes to human life, many people believe that it has only one act. Life ends when the curtain called death comes down.

As Christians, we believe something follows. There is a second act called eternal life. Death is only the intermission that separates act one which takes place on this world's stage, from act two which is staged in the kingdom of heaven.

Paul reminds us of that in this Sunday's Second Reading (1 Corinthians 15:12, 16-20). He says, "If for this life only we have hoped in Christ, we are the most pitiable people of all." But we do believe in that second act that follows death. As Paul goes on to say, "Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep."

In this Sunday's Gospel's (Luke 6:17, 20-26), Jesus makes it very clear that a person's situation and manner of living in act one may be completely reversed when the curtain rises on the second act.

Jesus tells us that those in this life, those in act one, who are poor, who are hungry, who are weeping, and who are persecuted for his sake, are blessed. They will find themselves in a very different situation in the second act. They will "rejoice and leap for joy." Their "reward will be great in heaven."

But the opposite will be true for those in this life who are rich, who want for nothing, who are blind to suffering and pain, and who are exalted by society. They will find their materialistic, self-centered lives will lead to woe. Their second act will see their world crash down around them.

This Sunday we are reminded that death does not end the play we call life; another act follows. While some people think that everything will turn out wonderfully for all characters in that second act, that conclusion does not fit the message of this Sunday's Gospel.

Each of our lives has two acts. Our condition and our way of living in the first act will determine what happens to us in the second act.

As Christians we believe that God has written the play called "Life" in two acts!

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