

# **LOOKING TO SUNDAY®**

**Sunday, February 23, 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.

## **LOVE DECIDES**

When the sun blazes, its rays heat the oceans and also the high-rise buildings that fill our cities. When it rains, drops of water cascade upon the grass and also on the asphalt that covers the street.

Sun and rain do not discriminate. That is equally true of God's love. As Jesus makes clear in this Sunday's Gospel (Matthew 5:38-48), God's love is all embracing.

That is the kind of love Jesus expects his followers to show others, even their enemies. As he says, "love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be children of your heavenly Father."

If we think of the love that Jesus speaks of in terms of hearts and flowers, fuzzy feelings and warm emotions – the kind of love that is expressed on Valentine's Day – then what he asks of us is impossible. How could we have such love for someone who persecutes us, for someone who bullies and insults us, for someone who acts as our enemy?

However, the love that Jesus requires of his followers is not a feeling but rather a matter of action. It is a matter of doing good even though it is not deserved. It is a matter of not repaying injury with injury, insult with insult, hurt with hurt. It is a matter of deciding that we will act as God acts toward those who make themselves his enemies by their sin and evil. God continues to do good for them.

As Jesus tells us, God "makes his sun rise on the bad and the good, and causes rain to fall on the just and the unjust." God blesses the saint and the sinner, the good and the bad, the deserving and the undeserving, the admirable and the detestable. Certainly the ministry of Jesus is proof of God's all-embracing love and care.

As children of God, as disciples of Jesus Christ, we are to strive to follow the example set by God himself. God does not discriminate in doing good. God is not selective in showing love. God lets his love shine on all. "So," as Jesus tells us "be perfect, just as your heavenly Father is perfect." That does not require hearts and flowers; rather it requires a decision to do good even for the undeserving.

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