

LOOKING TO SUNDAY®

Third Sunday of Lent, March 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.

WHAT GETS YOU ANGRY?

What are the things that get you angry, that irritate you, that make your blood boil?

Is it dealing with drivers who apparently do not know how to use a directional signal, or who believe they can multitask as they maneuver their cars through traffic?

Is it calling a government agency or a company's customer service department and then endlessly waiting on hold as you are reminded, "Your call is very important to us"?

Is it dealing with a plumber or electrician who shows up late, does a second rate job, overcharges, and then acts like he did you a favor?

Or perhaps it is dealing with children who are moody and ungrateful, relatives who show up unannounced, or people who become your friends because they want something from you?

We all have things that make us angry, sometimes very angry.

In this Sunday's Gospel (John 2:13-22), we hear about Jesus getting angry when he sees what is taking place in the Temple in Jerusalem. Vendors were selling animals for sacrifice and others were changing money.

Jesus was angry, not only because the Temple had become a "marketplace," but also because the poor and the powerless were being exploited. The money changers were exacting a high fee to provide the non-Roman coinage required in the Temple. Those selling animals for sacrifice were in league with the priests who certified what animals were suitable as an offering to God.

Jesus got angry not because he was being personally exploited and cheated, but because of what was being done to the poor and the powerless of his day.

If we consider other occasions when Jesus was upset, we see the same thing holds true. He was angry with religious leaders who were hypocrites, who said one thing and did another. As Jesus told his followers, "do and observe all things whatsoever they tell you, but do not follow their example. For they preach but they do not practice. They tie up heavy burdens hard to carry and lay them on people's shoulders." (Matthew 23:3-4)

Jesus was angry with the rich who were blind to the suffering of the hungry and the homeless. In the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, he warned them of their impending doom.

Jesus got angry when he saw the exploitation, the injustice, the greed, the selfishness, and the hypocrisy that were oppressing the poor and the powerless.

If we look at what gets us angry, we will see in most cases it is what negatively affects our feelings, our situation, and our well-being.

If only we would get angry over the fact that human beings are forced into the sex trade, that the lives of unborn children can be terminated, that trillions of dollars are spent on weapons of war, that government bureaucracies siphon off money meant for the poor, that students in failing school districts are awarded diplomas they can't read, that political leaders are more concerned for themselves than for the good of society, that the media warps the minds of the young with toxic entertainment in a search for ratings and profit.

If only we would get angry at all those things that would anger Jesus, and let that anger move us to righteous action just as it moved him.

In light of this Sunday's Gospel, it would be very worthwhile to take some time this Lent to consider what gets us angry, and even more importantly, what should be getting us angry in this very unjust world.

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