

# **LOOKING TO SUNDAY®**

**Sunday, March 9, 2025**

***The First Sunday of Lent***

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.

## **THREE PRACTICES, THREE PHRASES**

Prayer, fasting, and almsgiving are traditional practices associated with the season of Lent. During this penitential season we are urged to spend more time in prayer, to engage in some form of fasting, and to be more generous in sharing our blessings with those in need. These practices were mentioned in the Gospel for Ash Wednesday.

In this Sunday's Gospel (Luke 4:1-13), we hear that after his baptism in the Jordan, Jesus "was led by the Spirit into the desert for forty days to be tempted by the devil."

Jesus resisted the temptations posed by the devil by quoting three phrases taken from the scriptures.

When the devil tempted Jesus to change stone into bread to satisfy his hunger, Jesus proclaimed, "One does not live on bread alone."

When Jesus was tempted to give his allegiance to the devil in order to gain worldly power and glory, Jesus declared, "You shall worship the Lord, your God, and him alone shall you serve."

When the devil tempted Jesus to prove he was the Son of God by throwing himself from the parapet of the Temple, Jesus asserted, "You shall not put the Lord your God to the test."

These powerful phrases uttered by Jesus would be ideal phrases to make our own during Lent.

"One does not live on bread alone" can remind us that our deepest hungers are not satisfied by what we eat or drink, or by material possessions, but rather by love, mercy, meaning, truth, and a connection with God who created us with a hunger in our hearts for him.

"You shall worship the Lord, your God, and him alone shall you serve," can remind us of our dependence upon God and of the gratitude, thanks, and worship we owe him. Recognizing that all we have, even our very lives, are gifts from God, will lead us to proclaim, as we say at every Mass, "It is right to give him thanks and praise."

"You shall not put the Lord your God to the test," can remind us that as creatures of God, we are in no position to question God, make demands upon him, or require that God act in a certain way to pass our tests. We place our faith in God not because God does what we want, when we want, but because God has chosen to reveal himself to us as our loving Father.

Repeating these three phrases each day of Lent can remind us to feed our spirits, to acknowledge our dependence upon God, and to remember that God is in control.

Following the wisdom embodied in these phrases and performing the practices traditionally associated with Lent will help us grow in holiness during these forty days.

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