

LOOKING TO SUNDAY®

Sunday, March 11, 2018

The Fourth 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.

CONSEQUENCES

Some decisions can have negative consequences.

If I decide not to study, to cut classes, and to ignore course assignments, I should not be stunned to earn a failing grade.

If I decide to speed at 50 miles per hour through a residential neighborhood, I should not be shocked to be stopped by the police, issued a ticket, and perhaps have my license suspended.

If I decide to ignore my monthly car payments, I should not be surprised if my car is repossessed and I need to take public transportation to work.

Yet when it comes to my spiritual life and my relationship with God, I can mistakenly conclude that my eternal happiness is assured no matter what decisions I make.

After all, in Sunday's Gospel (John 3:14-21) we read that "God so loved the world that he gave his only Son." Furthermore, we are assured that "God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him."

Certainly, those words can give us reason to believe that our salvation is guaranteed, that what we do makes little difference. It is what Christ has done on the cross that makes all the difference.

Yet if we look carefully at Sunday's readings, we find they speak about decisions and the consequences that result from those decisions.

In our First Reading from the Second Book of Chronicles (2 Chronicles 36:14-16, 19-23), we hear how the Jewish people's decision to ignore the warning of God's prophets resulted in the people's removal to Babylon and the destruction of Jerusalem and its Temple.

Then in the Gospel, in addition to its words of comfort and salvation, we read that those who decide not to believe in Jesus are condemned. Those who decide for darkness remove themselves from the light. "This is the verdict, that the light came into the world, but people preferred darkness to light."

If decisions against God and for evil had no consequences, we would all be living in the Garden of Paradise. There would have been no need that "the Son of Man be lifted up, so that everyone who believes in him may have eternal life."

This Lent we are reminded to examine the decisions we are making when it comes to our relationship with God, for like all decisions they have consequences. In fact, they have eternal consequences.