

LOOKING TO SUNDAY®

Sunday, March 12, 2017

The Second 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.

THREE ADDED WORDS

Certain phrases from the Gospel can bring to mind particular moments in the life of Jesus.

"Take and eat; this is my body," reminds us of the Last Supper.

"Father, forgive them, they know not what they do," recalls the crucifixion of Jesus.

In this Sunday's Gospel (Matthew 17:1-9), which describes the transfiguration of Jesus, we hear the words, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased." Those words come from the clouds as Jesus shines with divine glory before Peter, James, and John.

That last phrase might also bring to mind another moment – one that happened when Jesus was baptized by John at the Jordan River. "And a voice came from the heavens, saying, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased." (Matthew 3:17)

In both cases, God the Father tells those present who Jesus is: he is more than a teacher, a preacher, a worker of miracles. Jesus is the beloved Son of God, the One who shines with divine glory.

But at the Transfiguration, God the Father adds three significant words, "Listen to him."

That additional phrase tells us that it is not enough to know who Jesus is. It is not enough to accept the divinity of Jesus and be able to proclaim him as God's beloved Son. A person could profess those truths and then live contrary to the Gospel. Even the devil knows who Jesus is.

We have to do more. We have to listen to Jesus. The appearance of Moses and Elijah in that moment of transfiguration reveals that the words of Jesus surpass even those spoken by those figures representing the Law and the Prophets.

We have to listen to Jesus. We have to hear and follow the words of God's beloved Son.

This Gospel for the Second Sunday of Lent challenges us to examine how we are listening to Jesus. Certainly that listening has to be more than just hearing the scripture readings proclaimed at Sunday Mass. Ten or fifteen minutes once a week would hardly seem to be what God had in mind when he said, "Listen to him."

Lent is a time to increase our listening to Jesus. We can do that in a variety of ways.

We can devote 10 minutes a day to reading our way through the New Testament.

We can read the Gospel passage assigned by the Church for each day of the year at usccb.org/bible

We can reflect on the daily homily preached by Pope Francis which can be found at zenit.org/articles/category/pope-holy-see/popese-morning-homily

We can read an acclaimed book about the Lord such as *Jesus: A Pilgrimage* by Rev. James Martin SJ

Listening to Jesus leads to living like Jesus. Perhaps that is why after telling us once more who Jesus was, the Father added, "Listen to him."

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