

## **LOOKING TO SUNDAY®**

**Sunday, March 18, 2018**

***The Fifth 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.

### **TO KNOW OR NOT TO KNOW?**

Each one of us knows our own date of birth. We know the day, the month, the year, and some of us even know the day of the week and the exact moment when we appeared on earth.

We write down that date on countless forms and it serves as a means of identification. We also highlight that particular day as we annually celebrate another birthday.

Every person knows the date of his or her birth better than any other date on the calendar. But I doubt few people would like to know their date of death. We might ask the Mother of God to "pray for us sinners now, and at the hour of our death." But we most probably do not want to know when that particular hour will arrive for each of us. We hope it will be far in the future!

In this Sunday's Gospel (John 12:20-33) we hear Jesus speaking of his approaching death. He is very aware that the hour is approaching when he will face suffering and the cross. As he tells Peter and Andrew, "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified."

Sharing our humanity, Jesus felt fear and trepidation as the hour of his death drew near. As he said "I am troubled now. Yet what should I say? 'Father, save me from this hour!'" In response, "a voice came from heaven."

Jesus faces the coming hour of his death strengthened by the Father and aware that his being lifted up on the cross would bring salvation and proclaim the depth of God's love for his people. As Jesus said, "But it was for this purpose that I came to this hour. Father, glorify your name."

In the Gospel of John, this scene is the equivalent of the Agony in the Garden described in the other three Gospels. In John's Gospel there is no account of Jesus undergoing intense sorrow and distress as he prays, "Father, if you are willing, take this cup away from me; still, not my will but yours be done." (Luke 22:42) Jesus simply goes into the Garden, and there he confronts his betrayer.

Jesus is ready for the hour of his death for he knows it to be the hour of his glorification. By his death he would reveal God's love for his people and in the Resurrection God would reveal Jesus' victory over sin and death.

The date each of us was born is something we know and celebrate, but the day we will die is something most of us would rather not know.

Yet when it does come, those who follow Jesus can face that hour knowing that it is not the end of our existence but our being drawn into new life with the Lord. As Jesus tells us, "When I am lifted up from the earth, I will draw everyone to myself."

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