

# ***LOOKING TO SUNDAY®***

**Sunday, March 30, 2025**

***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.

Looking to Sunday has been published for more than sixteen years.

## **LOOKING FOOLISH**

In this Sunday's Gospel (Luke 15:1-3, 11-32), Jesus tells the famous parable of the Prodigal Son, also known as the Parable of the Forgiving Father.

In the story, the father's younger son demands his inheritance in advance of his father's death. Rather than being angered by his son's callous request, the father agrees. The young man then leaves home and squanders all of his inheritance.

When he is reduced to tending swine, he decides to return home and hopes to be allowed back, at least as a servant. Amazingly, the father warmly welcomes his wayward son, restores him to his place in the family, and celebrates his return with a feast.

The father in the parable could be described as forgiving, understanding, compassionate, kindhearted, and merciful. But someone might very well describe that father as foolish.

When the younger son demanded his inheritance in advance, his father must have known of his son's immaturity, thoughtless spending, and irresponsible behavior. The traits that led that young man to end up in a pig pen must have been evident before his father foolishly gave into his demand for his inheritance.

When the young man returned to his father broken, apologetic, and destitute, the father welcomed him. Rather than having the young man suffer the consequences of his bad behavior, the father took him back without even a word of reprimand. Rather than teaching his son a lesson, the father threw him a party.

The older son, who refused to join the homecoming celebration for his brother, thought his father a fool for acting as he did. But the father was motivated by love and love sometimes does things that appear foolish.

The father loved his son so much that he allowed him the freedom to make his own decisions, even wrong ones. The father loved him so much that he never stopped waiting and hoping for his son to return. When he did, the father's love was so great that he forgave his prodigal son and restored him to the family.

In that parable, Jesus teaches us that God is like that father. God acts out of love for his people, and that can make God look foolish in the eyes of the world.

We see that "foolish" love of God throughout the scriptures. When Adam and Eve use their freedom to disobey God, he forgives them. When their descendants fall into sin, God decides to start again with Noah and his family. When the Chosen People continually break their covenants with him, God keeps forgiving and renewing his relationship with them. When God sends them

his Beloved Son, whom they reject and nail to a cross, God makes an ever greater and everlasting covenant in the blood of Jesus that promises life beyond the grave.

We experience that same kind of love in our own lives. We sin, we turn away from God, we fail to live as his faithful sons and daughters, yet God forgives us time and time again. God continually welcomes us back home.

God's actions might seem foolish in the eyes of the world, as foolish as the behavior of the father in Sunday's Gospel. But love sometimes does foolish things!

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