

# **LOOKING TO SUNDAY®**

**Sunday, April 3, 2016**

***Second Sunday of Easter***

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.

## **TENSILE STRENGTH**

Every material has a breaking point. A point at which it can no longer take the stress placed upon it. That stress will cause the material to bend, to stretch, to deform, and eventually to break.

Engineers even have a term used to describe the ability of a material to withstand stretching before it breaks or fails. That term is tensile strength. The greater the tensile strength the stronger the material.

Steel has a very high tensile strength. That strength has allowed us to use steel to construct ever larger and taller structures.

But steel and all other materials have a defined tensile strength. They all have a breaking point.

What is true for steel, is also true for human relationships. We might say they have a certain tensile strength.

Most relationships have a point where the people involved in them cannot stretch themselves any further and those relationships break apart.

That can happen in a marriage, when we learn our spouse has been having an affair. It can happen in a friendship, when we discover a close friend has betrayed our trust and confidence. It can happen in a business partnership when we uncover evidence that our partner has embezzled funds and ruined the company. In those cases, relationships break.

This Sunday's Gospel (John 20:19-31) is about the strength of the Lord's relationship with us.

In that Gospel, we read of two appearances of the Risen Lord to his disciples. One occurs on the evening of the first Easter Sunday and the other takes place the following Sunday.

In each case, the Lord comes to disciples who thought their relationship with him was ended. He was dead and locked in a tomb.

And now that he stood before them, they may have thought their relationship with him was deadlier than ever. They were the ones who had deserted him when he was arrested and ran for their lives rather than to his defense. They were the ones who had quickly forgotten the power of his preaching and the wonder of his miracles. They were the ones who by their words and actions had denied him. In their minds they had certainly stretched their relationship with him well beyond the breaking point.

When he appears, the Risen Lord does not express disappointment, hurt, and anger with his disciples, instead he wishes them "peace." He reaffirms his relationship with them and sends them out as agents of God's mercy.

The relationship that Jesus had with those disciples was one with a tensile strength beyond human expectation.

That is also the type of relationship that God has with us. No matter how we stress that relationship by our personal sins, no matter how often we fail to live as faithful disciples of Jesus Christ, God does not break the relationship he has chosen to have with us.

God stands by his relationship with us no matter how much we do not stand by our relationship with him.

All materials have a breaking point as do human relationships. But the relationship God has chosen to have with us has no breaking point. God's love, God's mercy, has infinite tensile strength!

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*Happy Easter Season!*