

LOOKING TO SUNDAY®

Sunday, April 6, 2014

This email, entitled Looking to Sunday®, focuses on the Gospel Reading 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.

LIFE ASSURANCE

If we were to send a message to a dear friend, pleading for that friend's help because we were in a desperate situation, we would expect our friend to respond, and to respond quickly. After all, that is what friends do for one another; they come to each other's aid. We would be disappointed, upset, and perhaps even angry if our friend took his or her own sweet time before coming to help us.

Yet in this Sunday's Gospel (John 11:1-45), Jesus seems to act like a non-responsive friend. Martha and Mary send word to Jesus that Lazarus, his friend and their brother, is seriously ill. Yet after receiving their plea for help, Jesus does not act as we would expect. "So when he heard that he (Lazarus) was ill, he remained for two days in the place where he was." When Jesus finally comes to Bethany, Lazarus has already been in the tomb for four days.

Jesus delayed his coming for a reason. As he told his disciples, "Lazarus has died. And I am glad for you that I was not there, that you may believe."

In the Gospel of John, Jesus performs a series of actions, signs that reveal who he is. Jesus changes water into wine, he walks on the sea, he multiplies food to feed thousands, he cures a paralyzed man, he saves a dying boy from death, and he opens the eyes of a man born blind. In performing those wondrous deeds Jesus reveals his power over the forces of nature and over human suffering and pain and he invites those who witness those signs to put their faith in him.

In Sunday's Gospel, Jesus performs his greatest sign. He calls Lazarus, reeking with the stench of death, out of the tomb and restores him to life. By doing so, Jesus reveals his power even over death, humanity's ultimate enemy. Jesus reveals himself to be "the resurrection and the life."

Jesus delayed his coming to the aid of Lazarus so that he might do something more than just raise him from his sickbed. Jesus raised Lazarus from death and in doing so Jesus also did something for us.

Jesus gave us the assurance that death will not be the final end for those who put their faith in him. As he said, "whoever lives and believes in me will never die" – that person will never suffer eternal death. As Lazarus discovered, a relationship with Jesus Christ assures life!

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