

LOOKING TO SUNDAY®

Sunday, April 15, 2018

Third 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.

FUTURE ANGELS?

"When we die, do we become angels?" That was the question that recently appeared in the question and answer column of *Saint Anthony Messenger*, a popular Catholic magazine.

An interesting question. When we die and are judged worthy of a place in heaven, do we become spiritual beings? Are we transformed into angels?

The answer might seem to be YES!

After all, when someone dies, people will often tell the grieving family members that they now have an angel in heaven to watch over them.

The death of a child sometimes leads people to comfort the distraught parents by saying that God wanted another angel in heaven.

And we often see pictures in which the deceased are depicted with wings, playing harps, and floating through the heavens.

This Sunday's Gospel Reading (Luke 24:35-48) provides us with a different answer, and that answer is NO.

When Jesus, the one who died and rose, returned to his disciples, he did not come as an angel. He did not return as a purely spiritual being.

Sunday's Gospel emphasizes the bodily nature of the Risen Lord.

We are told that the two disciples who met the Risen Lord as they walked home to Emmaus came to know him in the breaking of bread. They recognized him as he sat at a table to share a meal.

When the Risen Lord came to his disciples, who were gathered in fear in the Upper Room, he made it clear he was no ghost, no bodiless spirit. He told them, "Look at my hands and my feet, that it is I myself. Touch me and see, because a ghost does not have flesh and bones as you can see I have."

Then to emphasize his bodily nature, the Risen Lord asked for something to eat. "They gave him a piece of baked fish; he took it and ate it in front of them."

Angels do not have flesh and bones, angels do not sit at dinner tables, angels do not eat left-over fish.

As we profess in the Creed, Jesus "suffered death and was buried and rose again on the third day."

As Christians, we look forward “to the resurrection of the dead.” We look forward to the time when we will be raised to new life, and Christ “will change our lowly body to conform with his glorified body.” (Philippians 3:21)

The eternal life that awaits those who are faithful to the Lord is not some angel-like existence but an eternal existence – body and spirit.

How this happens and what our resurrected bodies will be like is, as the Catechism of the Catholic Church tells, beyond our understanding. (Catechism #1000)

But the certainty of the resurrection of the body is seen in Jesus Christ. “If the Spirit of the one who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, the one who raised Christ from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also.” (Romans 8:11)

This Easter Season proclaims the Good News that those who are faithful to the Lord become far more than angels, on the last day, like Jesus, they are raised to new and eternal life.

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*May the Risen Lord bless you with his presence and peace
during this Easter Season!*