

# **LOOKING TO SUNDAY®**

**Sunday, April 19, 2020**

## ***The 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.

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

### **PRACTICE FIRST**

"My Lord and my God." That was the profession of faith made by Thomas in this Sunday's Gospel (John 20:19-31) and it was equally made by the other Apostles.

Their master whom they had seen crucified and laid in a tomb, appeared among them. He was alive, risen, and glorified. How could they not believe in him?

Brought to faith by that profound experience and empowered by the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, those disciples went forth to preach the Gospel. They not only preached by the words they proclaimed, they preached by the way they lived their lives.

As we learn in our First Reading (Act 2:42-47), those first Christians "devoted themselves to the teaching of the apostles and to the communal life, to the breaking of bread and to the prayers." They lived differently.

They first came to faith, then came living out that faith.

However, for most of us the situation is reversed. Living the faith, practicing the faith, comes before we are truly able to say of Jesus, "My Lord and my God."

As children we hear Jesus spoken about by family and friends. We notice religious symbols in our home. We are taught how to make the Sign of the Cross and to say the Our Father and the Hail Mary. We are taken to Sunday Mass where we watch and imitate what people are doing. We go to religion class and prepare for First Penance, First Communion, and Confirmation.

We are engaging in religious practices before we truly understand what it means to have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ and to know him as our Lord and God.

That process of practicing our faith continues as we grow. We do what those first Christians did.

We listen to "the teaching of the apostles" handed down to us by the Church. We take part in "the communal life" of the Christian community by being involved with the Church and with our parish. We join in "the breaking of bread" as we gather at the Table of the Lord each Sunday. And we take part in the "prayers" as we speak to God in the words handed down by those who have gone before us.

As we do those things – which now have become more difficult to do because of the COVID-19 pandemic – we practice our faith. We grow in our relationship with God. We come to know Jesus as our Lord and God.

Unfortunately, the opposite is equally true. When we decide to stop doing those things, when we decide to stop practicing our faith, our relationship with the Lord fades. We no longer recognize him as the Lord of our life.

While some people, like the apostles, can be brought to faith in God through a profound religious experience, most of us come to faith by devotedly doing those things expected of Christians. If we practice our faith, we will come to a deeper faith in the Lord. Remember, practice makes perfect!

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