

LOOKING TO SUNDAY®

Easter Sunday, April 20, 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.

ENCOUNTERING THE RISEN LORD

“There is a person who flies, a person who can soar like an eagle without using any type of equipment or device.”

If we heard such a remarkable statement, we would be skeptical, if not completely incredulous. We would want proof before we believed a person could do something that no human being has been able to do since men and women appeared on earth. Ideally, we would want to see this flying person for ourselves to confirm that what we were told was not some elaborate hoax.

The Gospel for this coming Easter Sunday (John 20:1-9) and the readings throughout the Easter Season proclaim something even more remarkable – that Jesus, the one who was crucified, died, and was buried, is risen and alive.

As Christians we have heard that “Jesus is risen” so often during our lives that we may not appreciate how unbelievable that statement is. There are no historically documented cases of people executed in a most horrific way, sealed in a tomb, and then walking out three days later to greet their friends. Dead people are dead and gone.

So why do we believe that Jesus is risen and alive?

Do we believe because we have read it in the Bible? Do we believe because people we respect have told us? Do we believe because the Church has taught that doctrine for 2,000 years? Do we believe because such a belief gives us hope that we have a future beyond the grave? Do we believe because even nature itself seems to proclaim resurrection and new life as spring follows winter?

Certainly those are reasons to believe. But perhaps the basic reason we believe is because in some way we have experienced the presence of the Risen Lord. We have encountered him in our lives.

In Sunday's Gospel, we read how Mary Magdalene, Peter and another unnamed disciple “whom Jesus loved” came to the tomb that first Easter Sunday and discovered that the body of Jesus was not there. The unnamed disciple saw and believed but Peter and Mary Magdalene were unsure. As we read in the Gospel, “they did not yet understand the Scripture that he had to rise from the dead.”

Later, Peter, Mary, and all the disciples became believers because the Risen Lord came to be with them. He spoke with them, he ate with them, he spent time with them. They believed because they encountered the Risen Lord.

By his Resurrection Jesus broke the bonds of death and the boundaries of space and time. Because of this, the Risen Lord can be with us today. He makes himself known in the Church, in

the Eucharist and the other Sacraments, in our moments of prayer and reflection, in the events of our lives, and in people who give him flesh by the way they live the Gospel.

It was an encounter with the Risen Lord that brought the first disciples to believe in the Resurrection. Such wonderful encounters still happen today for the Lord is risen and alive and with us. That is why we believe. Alleluia!

© 2014 Rev. Thomas B. Iwanowski

*May you experience the peace and joy of the Risen Lord
during this Easter Season!*