

LOOKING TO SUNDAY®

Easter Sunday, April 21, 2019

The Resurrection of the Lord

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 ten years.

A FRIEND'S RETURN

Imagine for a moment you had a wonderful evening with a dear friend whom you had known since high school.

You had a delicious dinner at a popular restaurant, shared memories about the past, spoke about what was happening in your lives, and then talked about your hopes and dreams for the future.

As you parted, you made plans to meet again soon. As your friend drove home, there was a terrible accident. A tractor-trailer suddenly crossed over from the opposite lane and crashed head on into your friend's car. Your friend was killed instantly. When you got the news the following morning, you were devastated. You had just seen your friend hours earlier and now that friend was gone forever.

You went to the wake. There you tried to comfort your friend's family but you broke into tears as you struggled to find the right words to express your sympathy.

You attended the funeral Mass and then stood by the graveside as you watched the coffin slowly lowered into the ground. You felt some part of yourself was also buried that morning. As the days passed, you learned to cope with your grief. You were thankful that your last memory of your friend was the warm conversation you enjoyed during your final supper together.

One afternoon the following month, you heard your doorbell ring. You went to the door thinking it must be the UPS driver delivering the items you had ordered from Amazon. When you opened the door, you were dumbfounded. The friend whose funeral you had attended was standing there – alive, radiant, smiling, asking, "Do you have time for coffee. I've missed you."

Such an experience would profoundly change you. Imagine the questions you would ask your friend. Consider how the idea of eternal life would go from being a matter of faith to a matter of fact. Envision how your priorities and your values would change. Think of how your fear of dying would dissolve. Picture how the limitations of this physical world would be transcended as you considered life from the perspective of heaven.

Considering such a scenario can give us some insight into what Mary Magdalene, Peter, John, Thomas, and the other disciples experienced that first Easter. (John 20:1-9)

We tend to think of the resurrection of Jesus as a religious, spiritual experience, which it certainly was, but it was also a life-altering experience for the disciples.

The one whose life blood had drained into the soil below the cross, was alive, glorified, and standing before them. He was, as Thomas proclaimed, "Lord and God."

His risen presence was the ultimate affirmation of all Jesus had taught and promised. "I am the resurrection and the life; whoever believes in me, even if he dies, will live." (John 11:25)

Without the disciples' encounter with the Risen Lord, the memory of Jesus would have faded over the generations like that of any loved one.

Our gathering this Easter Sunday testifies to the profound impact their encounter with the Risen Lord had on those first disciples. That impact continues to this very day as the Risen Christ stands at the door of our hearts waiting for us to let him in. Alleluia, the Lord is Risen. He is with us!

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Happy Easter!

May the Risen Lord bless you with his presence and peace.