

LOOKING TO SUNDAY®

Sunday, May 6, 2018

Sixth 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.

WHAT IS YOUR GRADE?

Students are graded by their professors. The professors are the ones who set the requirements of the course, teach the material, prepare the tests, score the examinations, and then determine what grade each student will receive.

But imagine if each student determined the requirements of the course, prepared the examination, checked it, and then awarded him or herself the final grade for the course.

Most likely the grades awarded by the students would be much higher than the grades given them by their professors. Certainly, no student would give him or herself a failing grade.

But students are not the only ones who would be generous and easygoing if they graded themselves. We often do the same thing when it comes to determining how we are living as followers of Jesus Christ.

In this Sunday's Gospel (15:9-17), Jesus tells his disciples, "This I command you: love one another." Jesus tells us to be loving people.

If we had to evaluate how we were doing in keeping that commandment of the Lord most of us would give ourselves a passing grade. And many of us might give ourselves a far higher grade than that.

After all, if you or I were asked if we were loving people, our response would be affirmative. Our answer would not be a lie, for we would evaluate ourselves according to our understanding of what it means for us to be loving people. We would set the requirements, and would judge ourselves as meeting those benchmarks.

However, in this Sunday's Gospel, Jesus not only tells us to "love one another," Jesus tells us what it means to love as he commands. Jesus sets the requirements we are to meet.

Jesus tells us that we are to love as he loved. "This is my commandment: love one another as I love you."

As followers of Jesus, we are to love just as Jesus loved the people he encountered in his life. His love was not just a matter of feelings, emotions, and kind words.

Jesus loved by showing mercy, compassion, forgiveness and acceptance to all people, even his enemies.

He loved by reaching out to the poor and powerless, the sick and the sinner.

He loved by standing up for what was right and good and condemning what was evil and hypocritical.

He loved by speaking the truth and boldly proclaiming that the Kingdom of God was at hand, even to those who were unwilling to hear his message.

He loved us by laying down his life so that we might be raised up to a new relationship with God.

It's easy for us as Christians to give ourselves a passing grade if we set the standards, if we determine the requirements.

But when we are judged by the Lord, he will use his standards, not ours. The grade that Jesus gives us will most likely not be as high as our own. "This is my commandment: love one another as I love you."

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