

# **LOOKING TO SUNDAY®**

**Sunday, May 10, 2015**

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.

## **ARE YOU DOING OK?**

"Are you doing OK in school?" If you were to ask a teenager that question, most teenagers would answer, "Yes." Even those whose grades were below average would compare themselves to students who were failing and arrive at the conclusion they were doing OK. At least they were passing. They were not being required to repeat a grade. They were not dropping out of high school. Using their personal criteria, most teenagers would conclude they were doing OK in school.

The same kind of reasoning is often used by people when they consider how they are living their Christian faith. Most believers would say that they are doing OK. After all, they were baptized. They profess that Jesus is the Son of God. They accept the truth of the Bible. They pray at least a few times a week. They try to get to church on Sunday if they don't have something more important to do. They give some money to charity. They try to be nice to their neighbor. They try to do the "Christian thing."

When we establish our own criteria for judging how we are doing as students, as Christians, or as anything else for that matter, most of us will conclude that we are doing OK – and many times even better than just OK.

In the Gospels, Jesus tells us that those who wish to be his disciples are to love God and love their neighbor. If we are the ones who decide what it means to keep those two great commandments, we can easily conclude we are doing OK as Christians.

However in this Sunday's Gospel (John 15:9-17), Jesus gives us the standard by which we are to judge how we are doing in following his commandment of love. Jesus says, "This is my commandment: love one another as I love you." Jesus tells us that Christians are those who love others as he did.

As we know, Jesus showed his love by accepting the outcast, showing mercy to the sinner, forgiving his enemies, preaching a message of hope, feeding the hungry, caring for the sick, confronting hypocrisy and injustice, seeing the good in everyone, and making God's kingdom present by his way of life and in his interactions with others.

Jesus showed his love by respecting and valuing the people he met. He never saw enemies beyond redemption; he saw potential friends. He was even willing to lay down his life for others. As he said, "No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends."

When it came to God, Jesus showed his love for God by putting the will of the Father before his own. As he said, "I do not seek my own will but the will of the one who sent me." (John 5:30) Jesus loved the Father by letting the will of the Father guide his life. Doing so made him the Beloved Son in whom the Father was well pleased. (Mark 1:11)

If we want to know how we are doing as Christians, we are not to evaluate ourselves by looking at others or by the criteria we set. We need to compare ourselves to Jesus Christ. If we use that standard we will not be so quick to conclude we are doing OK.

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