

## **LOOKING TO SUNDAY®**

**Sunday, May 15, 2016**

### ***The Solemnity of Pentecost***

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.

### **THE BEGINNING AND THE END**

If you asked anyone who gives speeches to tell you the most important part of any talk, the answer you would probably hear is, "The beginning and the end."

Speakers need a good opening to catch the attention of their audience. Speakers need to make the people gathered before them want to hear what they are about to say.

If speakers fail to do that, audience members start drifting off into their own thoughts. Once that happens, it is very difficult to regain their attention.

The ending is equally important since what a speaker says last tends to linger in the minds of those listening. A good ending relates to the opening, summarizes what has been said, and leaves the audience impressed and motivated.

In this current presidential campaign we certainly have heard examples of speeches with great beginnings and great endings. We also have listened to speeches that fell flat because of boring beginnings and rambling, lifeless endings.

What is true for speeches is also true for the public speaking that takes place at Mass. It is true for the homily.

Homilies need a good beginning and a good ending. Homilies that begin, "In today's Gospel we heard..." followed by a retelling of the passage that was just proclaimed, tend to encourage congregational daydreaming. And homilies that end with "So in light of the Gospel, let us try to be better Christians" barely motivate the congregation to stand for the Creed.

During the 50 days of this Easter Season, which began Easter Sunday and concludes this Sunday with the Solemnity of Pentecost, we have heard the Church's "Easter Homily." We heard that homily as we listened to the readings of the eight Sundays of the Easter Season.

That homily had an amazing beginning and a great ending.

That homily began with the news that the tomb where the body of Jesus was placed was found empty. As Peter proclaimed, "they put him to death by hanging

him on a tree. This man God raised on the third day...To him all the prophets bear witness, that everyone who believes in him will receive forgiveness of sins through his name.”

Never before or since has anyone dead and buried been raised to life and raised to a life beyond our human experience. News that death and nothingness are not the destiny of those who put their faith in Jesus Christ is certainly attention-getting.

This Sunday that Easter homily ends with the news that the Spirit of the Risen Lord was unleashed upon this world. (Acts 2:1-11) That Spirit blew the disciples out of their tombs of fear and into the streets of Jerusalem. It fired them up to boldly announce the “mighty acts of God” made present in Jesus Christ.

That Spirit is with us now empowering us to change our world. (John 14:15-16, 23-26) We are not victims of history. With the power of the Spirit we can make history. If we allow the Holy Spirit to inspire and motivate us we can make God’s kingdom of love, justice, and peace more present in our world.

An amazing event was proclaimed on Easter Sunday and this Pentecost Sunday we are told that amazing things can continue to happen in our day thanks to the power of the Spirit.

This 50 day Easter Homily had a great beginning and a great ending, and the middle was amazing as well!

© 2016 Rev. Thomas B. Iwanowski