

LOOKING TO SUNDAY®

Sunday, May 17, 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.

WORDS OF CONSECRATION

"This is my body. This is my blood." The Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke contain those words of consecration first spoken by Jesus at the Last Supper. Since that time, priests speak those powerful words of Jesus each time Mass is celebrated. With them ordinary bread and wine become something extraordinary. They become the very Body and Blood of Jesus Christ given to us to nourish our spirits and to bring us into a "holy communion" with Christ and his Church.

However, those sacred words of consecration do not appear in the Gospel of John. Rather than recounting how Jesus took bread and wine and said, "This is my body. This is my blood," John speaks of Jesus washing the feet of his disciples. Jesus then tells them, "I have given you a model to follow, so that as I have done for you, you should also do." (John 13:15)

But if we look at all the words that Jesus speaks in the Gospel of John, we see that John's account of the Last Supper does contain words of "consecration." However, those words of consecration are not the same as in the other Gospels, nor are they spoken over bread and wine but rather over the disciples. Those words appear in this Sunday's Gospel (John 17:11-19).

There during his prayer at the Last Supper Jesus says, "Holy Father...they do not belong to the world any more than I belong to the world. Consecrate them in the truth. Your word is truth. As you sent me into the world, so I sent them into the world. And I consecrate myself for them, so that they also may be consecrated in truth."

Jesus asks his heavenly Father to protect his disciples from being taken in by a world in which Satan, "the father of lies" (John 8:44) seems to hold sway.

Jesus then prays that in this deluded world God will enable his disciples to authentically and faithfully live the truth they profess. He asks his Father to "consecrate them in the truth."

In doing so Jesus is asking his Father to enable his disciples to truly embody the truth they profess just as he did. As Jesus himself was able to say, "I am...the truth." (John 14:6)

The Gospels contain the powerful words of Jesus that consecrate simple gifts of bread and wine into his very Body and Blood. The Gospels also contain his equally powerful words that consecrate ordinary Christians and send them forth to be lights of truth in a world darkened by lies, violence, and deceptive ideologies.

Jesus consecrates us to continue his mission. We are a consecrated people!

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