

LOOKING TO SUNDAY®

Sunday, May 19, 2019

The Fifth 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.

Looking to Sunday has been published for more than ten years.

WHAT'S YOUR GRADE?

During the months of May and June, the school year comes to an end. For those in college that happens in early or mid-May and for those in grammar or high school the academic year ends in June. And sometimes late in June, depending upon how many school days may have been cancelled because of bad winter weather.

Whenever it comes, the end of the school year brings final exams. Teachers test their students and then give them a grade that indicates how well the students have done in absorbing the material covered in class.

But imagine rather than having students take any type of written or oral examination, teachers simply asked their students to grade themselves.

Students could award themselves an "A" or a 4.0, or "B" or 3.0 or any other grade they wished. Whatever grade they chose would appear on their record. I doubt any students would give themselves a failing grade.

As Christians we are all students and Jesus is our teacher. He has taught us that we are to love God and love our neighbor. That lesson is continually reinforced each time we come to Mass or read the scriptures. Suppose for a moment we had to grade ourselves on how well we have taken the message of Jesus to heart and made it the guide of our lives.

Most of us would give ourselves a passing grade and perhaps even an "A". We would determine the criteria and standard of what it means for us to be a loving Christian, and we would see ourselves as meeting those standards. Like school students grading themselves, we would certainly not give ourselves an "F".

But in this Sunday's Gospel (John 13:31-33a, 34-35), Jesus, our teacher, sets a standard far higher than we would ever set for ourselves.

He tells us, "I give you a new commandment: love one another. As I have loved you, so you also should love one another." The love of Jesus was merciful, forgiving, compassionate, and self-sacrificing. It was far more than kind words and warm feelings. His love led him to put others before himself, it led him to stoop down and wash feet, and it led him to be lifted high on a cross.

It's easy for us to consider ourselves as "passable" Christians if we grade ourselves. But the mark that will count on our final transcript is not the one we award ourselves, but the one based on the criteria set by Jesus, our teacher. "Love one another. As I have loved you."

© 2019 Rev. Thomas B. Iwanowski

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