

LOOKING TO SUNDAY®

Sunday, May 26, 2019

The 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.

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

NO DIPLOMAS ON THE WALL

When you visit a medical office, you usually see diplomas and accreditations prominently displayed on the walls. Those credentials testify to the educational level and skills of the various physicians associated with the practice. The more courses completed, the more knowledge gained, the more diplomas on the wall.

That is not only true for doctors but for lawyers and other professionals. We might be a little uneasy if we did not see some sign of a professional's level of skill and achievement on display in that person's office.

While professionals are awarded diplomas for the courses they have completed, there are no diplomas or credentials awarded to Christians. That is the case because Christians are always learning, they never reach the point of knowing all there is to know about being a follower of Christ.

Even Jesus, the perfect teacher, did not tell his disciples all they needed to know about proclaiming the Gospel and forming the Christian community. He awarded them no credentials to display, instead he promised them the gift of the Holy Spirit to continue to guide and instruct them.

As Jesus says in this Sunday's Gospel (John 14:23-29), "The Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything and remind you of all that I told you."

We see that Holy Spirit at work in this Sunday's First Reading (Acts 15:1-2, 22-29) that describes a major issue that confronted the first Christians. Since the initial followers of Jesus were Jewish, a question arose about the non-Jews who were accepting the Gospel. Did they first have to convert to Judaism in order to become Christians?

The "apostles and elders" arrived at the answer not by considering what they learned in "class" but by considering the guidance and wisdom given by the Holy Spirit. The solution reached was described as "the decision of the Holy Spirit and of us."

That Holy Spirit continues to guide the Church. There are no members of the Church with diplomas that testify they have achieved a level of knowledge that allows them to know what the Lord expects of his Church in every circumstance.

Christians are always learning more about what it means to follow Christ, always learning more about what God requires of them, always learning more about how they should respond to the challenges of this world. Christians who think they know it all are Christians who do not understand the guiding role of the Holy Spirit.

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*May the Risen Lord continue to bless you
during this Easter Season!*