

## **LOOKING TO SUNDAY®**

**Sunday, June 3, 2018**

### ***The Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ***

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.

#### **A RECEPTION FOLLOWS**

Imagine going to church for the wedding of some dear friends, and immediately after the ceremony the invited guests simply went back to their own homes. There was no wedding reception, no dinner, no party, no nothing. We certainly would think it strange. (And I suppose, a little cheap!)

Wedding ceremonies are almost always followed by some type of wedding reception. Some are lavish, and some are simple, but relatives and friends expect something to follow the couple's exchange of vows.

Such receptions allow the guests to congratulate and toast the newlyweds. But they also do something else.

Receptions allow the family and friends of the bride and groom to celebrate the new relationship they have with one another. For weddings do not just unite two individuals, they unite two families as well.

Those new family relationships are acknowledged and celebrated as people eat and drink, dance and talk.

Wedding receptions are the way we celebrate the new relationships that happen because of the marriage contract, the marriage covenant.

Wedding receptions can give us an insight into this Sunday's feast of The Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ.

We usually understand this feast as being a reminder of the depth of God's love for us. The Lord's love is so great that he comes to us in consecrated bread and wine, so we might become one "holy communion" with him and our fellow Christians. We are also reminded that we are to be what we receive. We are to be the Body and Blood of Christ; we are to be the presence of Christ in the world.

But Sunday's feast and the scripture readings chosen for the day also remind us of our covenant with God.

In Sunday's First Reading (Exodus 24:3-8), we hear how Moses relates the expectations, "the words and ordinances of the Lord," and the people respond by saying, "We will do everything that the Lord has told us."

After that exchange of "vows," Moses takes the blood of sacrificed young bulls and sprinkles it upon the altar and upon the people. That sharing of blood symbolizes the relationship between God and the Chosen People. The words of the covenant are celebrated by that ritual.

In the Gospel (Mark 14:12-16, 22-26) that recounts the Last Supper, Jesus speaks of the new covenant that will come about through his blood which “will be shed for many.” In sharing the bread and wine of that Holy Meal, the disciples are drawn into a new relationship with God.

That new relationship with God, which is ours because of the sacrifice of Jesus, is also highlighted in the Second Reading (Hebrews 9:11-15). It proclaims Jesus to be the “mediator of a new covenant” that promises eternal life.

Each time we gather for Mass, we listen to the scriptures. We hear words that speak of the relationship that God has chosen to have with us. Then after hearing those words we celebrate that relationship as we share the Body and Blood of Christ at the table of the Lord.

We might say that just as the life-changing words spoken by the bride and groom are followed by a wedding reception, so the words that proclaim our relationship with the Lord are followed by a “reception,” the reception of The Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ.

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