

LOOKING TO SUNDAY®

Trinity Sunday, June 15, 2014

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.

THE THREE WORD PHRASE

What is the most powerful three word phrase in the English language?

If we gave that question some thought, we might pick the phrase that has likely affected our own lives most powerfully. That phrase is "I love you."

When someone tells us "I love you," it makes us feel wonderful, joyful, wanted, affirmed, special, and accepted. It changes our outlook on life. It lets us know that someone has opened his or her heart and let us in. That phrase is especially powerful when it is said by someone outside of our family, by someone who does not have to love us.

But whoever speaks that phrase has to prove it. Without loving actions the sentiment expressed by those three words becomes a hurtful lie. Love has to be demonstrated as well as expressed.

This Sunday, Father's Day, children will tell their fathers "I love you" by the cards they send, the words they say, and the gifts given that day. But if those expressions of love are to ring true they need to be preceded by acts of love and thoughtfulness throughout the year.

In Sunday's Gospel (John 3:16-18), Jesus speaks of God's love. He tells us that God has not only spoken words of love, God's loving words have taken flesh and come among us in him. As Jesus says, "God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him might not perish but might have eternal life." Certainly the life and death of God's Son was vivid proof of the Father's love. As Saint Paul wrote in his Letter to the Romans, "God proves his love for us in that while we were still sinners Christ died for us." (Romans 8:8).

In return God expects us to prove our love for him by our belief in his Son. This belief, like love, has to be more than just a matter of words it has to be a matter of action. In the Gospels, Jesus did not teach people a creed to recite to show their faith in him. Instead he challenged those who believed in him to forgive their enemies, to see the stranger as a neighbor, to share their blessings with those in need, and to work for justice and peace. He challenged those who believed to follow him and to follow his example.

Jesus continues to do the same today. He challenges us to believe and to show our belief by our actions. How we do that determines our future. As Sunday's Gospel reminds us, "Whoever believes in him will not be condemned, but whoever does not believe has already been condemned, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God."

Belief in Jesus, like love, has to be more than just a matter of words. It has to be seen in action. "Faith demands proof" is another three word phrase that should affect our lives!

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