

LOOKING TO SUNDAY®

Sunday, June 21, 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.

FAIR WEATHER FRIENDS

There are all kinds of friends. There are good friends, close friends, best friends, boyfriends, girlfriends, childhood friends, neighborhood friends, school friends, work friends, etc. Such friends add joy to our lives.

But there is one type of friend we would rather not have, namely, a fair weather friend.

When things are bright and sunny in our lives, fair weather friends enjoy the "good weather." This is especially the case when they can benefit from our successes in life. But when our lives get dark and difficult, fair weather friends run for cover, they run out of our lives. They are not there to help and support us.

In this Sunday's Gospel (Mark 4:35-41), we meet disciples who act like fair weather friends; better yet they act like fair weather believers.

The disciples were excited to be followers of Jesus, to be friends of the increasingly popular rabbi from Nazareth. They had seen people moved by his words and witnessed the sick and the possessed made whole. They had even heard demons acknowledge him to be "the Son of God." (Mark 3:11)

Now they were in a boat that was in danger of being swamped by the wind and waves and suddenly their faith in Jesus began to waver. He seemed so oblivious to their situation and unconcerned about their fate that they asked him, "Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?"

They had been faithful followers of Jesus when things were going well, but when things took a turn for the worse, their faith weakened. They questioned him.

We often act like those disciples. When things are going well in our lives, our faith is strong and we are confident of God's love and care. But when bad things happen to us, when our lives are rocked by illness or disappointment, when we feel swamped by one challenge after another, our faith can weaken. God seems to be "asleep on a cushion."

Yet this is precisely the time when we are called to be firm in faith. If we put our faith in God only when things are going well in our lives that would not be faith, it would just be a matter of good sense. Believe in God, get showered with blessings.

Yet faith means trusting in God's presence and care for us even when God seems absent. Certainly Jesus himself gave us an example of such faith in God during his ministry, especially during his passion and death.

Just as friendship is tested in times of trial, so faith in God is tested in times of difficulty. God does not want fair weather believers any more than we want fair weather friends!

