

LOOKING TO SUNDAY®

Sunday, June 28, 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.

DESPERATION

People visit a doctor for a variety of reasons. Some go because they have severe pain or a condition that does not seem to be improving on its own. Others go to manage a chronic disease like diabetes. Still others visit a doctor because their school or job requires a physical examination or proof of immunization. Some go at the urging of a relative or friend. Others go because they are looking for reassurance about their health. And certain people make an appointment because dealing with a doctor provides a moment of human interaction in an otherwise lonely day.

But whatever their motivation, doctors do their best to deal with the individuals who arrive seeking their help.

In this Sunday's Gospel (Mark 5:21-43), we hear of two people who go to Jesus – Jairus, a synagogue official with a dying daughter, and an unnamed woman suffering with hemorrhages.

But what motivated those two people to seek out Jesus? Was it faith? Was it a desire for a miracle? Was it the reports they had heard about the healing power of Jesus? Was it the fear of death? Was it a father's love for his child?

Certainly it could have been any of those things. But there was another reason and perhaps it was the main reason. They went to Jesus out of desperation.

Jairus had to be desperate to go to Jesus. Jairus was a synagogue official, a respected member of the religious establishment whose members were already voicing concerns about the rabbi from Nazareth. The Pharisees and the Herodians were talking about putting him to death (Mark 3:6), and the scribes from Jerusalem claimed Jesus was "possessed by Beelzebul." (Mark 3:22)

Desperate to save his dying daughter, Jairus risks criticism and ridicule from his fellow religious leaders, and even a possible "No" from Jesus, when he comes to plead for help. "My daughter is at the point of death. Please, come lay your hands on her that she may get well and live." A desperate parent will do anything to save a child.

The woman who had been suffering with hemorrhages for twelve years was certainly desperate. "She had suffered greatly at the hands of many doctors and had spent all that she had. Yet she was not helped but only grew worse." She was at the end of her rope. She had tried everything else, why not try Jesus?

In both cases, Jesus responded to the needs of these desperate people. A daughter was raised from her deathbed before her distraught father. And for the first time in twelve years, a woman "felt in her body that she was healed of her affliction."

Sunday's Gospel reading reminds us that Jesus did not question the motivation of those who came seeking his help. It made no difference if they were led by faith, by love, by concern, by

hunger, by pain, by fear, or by desperation. Jesus responded to their needs. The response of Jesus was based not on what was in their hearts, but rather on what was in his.

The same remains true today. Jesus stands ready to receive people with mercy and love even if they come to him only out of desperation. As his Church, we have to do the same!

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