

LOOKING TO SUNDAY®

Feast of Saints Peter and Paul, June 29, 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.

GETTING THE RIGHT ANSWER

When teachers question their students about the subject they are teaching, they expect their students to respond with their own answers. Teachers do not want students getting answers from their classmates and they do not appreciate students whispering answers to those being questioned. Each student is expected to give his or her own response, not one that comes from someone else.

In this Sunday's Gospel (Matthew 16:13-19) for the Feast of Saints Peter and Paul, Jesus asks a question of his disciples, of his students. He asks, "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?" His disciples have no problem giving Jesus the latest speculation about him. They chime in, "Some say John the Baptist, others Elijah, still others Jeremiah or one of the prophets."

Then Jesus asks a harder question, "But who do you say that I am?" This time only one disciple attempts an answer. Peter says, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."

Peter gives the correct answer, but then Jesus says something surprising. Jesus, the teacher, tells Peter that he did not arrive at the answer by himself. Someone gave him the right response. As Jesus says, "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah. For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my heavenly Father."

Jesus tells Peter that God gave him the understanding and the vision of faith to recognize Jesus' true identity as the Son of God. Without God providing the right answer, Peter would not have known who his teacher truly was.

But Peter was not the only one who was given the right answer. Saint Paul, who we also honor this Sunday, was dramatically made aware of that same answer.

Paul thought he knew who Jesus was. Jesus was a false messiah, someone whose followers were undermining the faith of the Jewish people. While on his way to Damascus to arrest those embracing this false teaching, Jesus showed him the light. Jesus brought Paul to an understanding he could never have arrived at by himself.

God gave Peter and Paul the correct response to the question that appears in this Sunday's Gospel, "But who do you say that I am?"

Peter and Paul are not the only ones who were told the answer to that most important question – Who is Jesus? God has also whispered the answer to us as well. God has given us the gift of faith in his Son.

When it comes to identifying Jesus this is one time when a teacher does not mind his students getting the right answer from someone else!