

LOOKING TO SUNDAY®

Sunday, July 6, 2025

The Fourteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

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.

Looking to Sunday has been published for more than sixteen years.

LOOK AT THE POSITIVE!

Many of us are much better at pointing out flaws in people than in recognizing their good qualities. We even do that to ourselves. We see our flaws and failings more readily than we do our virtues and positive qualities.

That is also true when it comes to institutions. Every July 4, we celebrate our nation's declaration of independence from Great Britain. This year, we mark the 249th anniversary of that historic event.

While most Americans celebrate the strengths of our nation and the blessings we enjoy as citizens of the United States, some people focus only on our failings as a nation. They point to income inequality, disparities in health care, lingering racism, political polarization, etc.

The tendency of some individuals to focus only on the negative is also seen in the Catholic Church. There are Catholics who see only the Church's flaws and failings and signs of its decline and irrelevancy. They point to a lack of priestly and religious vocations, the decrease in Sunday Mass attendance, the drop in the number of baptisms, confirmations, weddings and funerals, and the growing number of people who view the Church as an outmoded institution from an unenlightened age.

But for practicing Catholics, the Church is not a declining institution disconnected from their lives. For us, the Church is like the city of Jerusalem spoken about in Sunday's First Reading (Isaiah 66:10-14c).

There the prophet Isaiah describes Jerusalem as a tender, compassionate mother who cares for her children. She nurses them at her breasts, carries them in her arms, fondles them in her lap, and comforts them as a mother comforts her child.

For us, the Church is the new Jerusalem, who like the maternal Jerusalem described by Isaiah, nourishes and cares for her children. That is why Catholics often refer to the Church as Holy Mother Church.

The Church, our Mother, washes us clean in the waters of baptism. She tells us the Gospel stories that introduce us to Jesus and reveal the meaning and purpose of life. She feeds us with the bread and wine of the Eucharist. She brings us into a relationship with our brothers and sisters in Christ. She comforts us when we sin and assures us of God's mercy. She stands by us as our lives come to an end and proclaims there is a new and heavenly Jerusalem waiting for those who have been faithful children of God.

Yes, the Church is not perfect; after all, it includes us sinners. But those who focus on the flaws of the Church fail to see the love, tenderness, care, and support that Holy Mother Church, the New Jerusalem, provides for her children.

As the Lord tells us, speaking through Isaiah, "Rejoice with Jerusalem and be glad because of her, all you who love her; exult, exult with her."

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