

LOOKING TO SUNDAY®

Sunday, July 7, 2019

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 ten years.

PAY ATTENTION!

Imagine for a moment, you are in an airport terminal waiting to board your flight. As you wait, there is a series of announcements concerning cancellations and delays due to bad weather in other parts of the country, followed by instructions telling travelers what to do if their flights are affected.

Most likely, you would pay little notice to those announcements; they would just be background noise. You would only pay attention when you heard something that had to do with your own flight.

Most of us tend to tune out announcements and instructions that do not seem to concern us.

That may happen with this Sunday's Gospel reading (Luke 10:1-2. 17-20). There Jesus gives a series of instructions to the 72 people that he sends to the places he intends to visit. He gives them specific directions.

He tells them to travel in pairs, to "carry no money bag, no sandals, and greet no one along the way." He instructs them to accept the hospitality of those who offer it, and to eat whatever food is given them. He directs them to cure the sick and to announce, "The Kingdom of God is at hand for you." And finally, he commands them to ignore those who refuse to welcome their message.

As we start to hear those instructions of Jesus, we can tune them out. We can think they are meant for missionaries or perhaps for certain lay people who feel called to stand on street corners witnessing to Jesus.

In addition, those instructions seem impractical and foolish. Who would travel with no money, no luggage, no food, and with no idea where they would stay?

However, if those directions given by Jesus were meant only for a select few, why would the Church have chosen this Gospel passage to be read at all Masses celebrated throughout the world?

Furthermore, if Luke and the other evangelists thought that parts of their Gospels were only for certain people, they would have written different versions. There would have been a version for missionaries, another for Church leaders, and a third for those in the pews!

Since this was not the case, those instructions, at least in some way, are meant for all who hear them. Certainly, that is the case with the most important and central instruction that is given in this Sunday's passage. In fact, it is given twice. Jesus instructs his disciples to tell those who

welcome them, "The Kingdom of God is at hand for you." And directs them to tell those who refuse to receive them, "Yet know this, the Kingdom of God is at hand."

That instruction is meant for us. We are to help people see how God is working in their lives and in our world to bring about his Kingdom.

We are to help people realize the depth of God's love, mercy, and concern for them.

We are to help people appreciate the meaning, purpose, and joy that can be found in life when we follow the way of the Lord who proclaimed, "I came so that they might have life and have it more abundantly." (John 10:10)

This Sunday, Jesus gives an instruction meant not just for the 72, but also for each one of us. Tell people, "The Kingdom of God is at hand." That is an instruction that demands our attention!

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