

# **LOOKING TO SUNDAY®**

**Sunday, July 10, 2016**

## ***The Fifteenth 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.

### **THE TRUE GOOD SAMARITAN**

Of all the stories told by Jesus, which one is the most well known?

It just might be the story we hear in this Sunday's Gospel (Luke 10:25-37), the story of the Good Samaritan.

Even people who know little or nothing about the Gospels seem to know the story, or at least they know the term "good Samaritan." They know it refers to a person who goes out of his or her way to help someone in need.

Those who regularly attend Mass have heard the parable many times and listened to many homilies centered on this famous story of the man who stopped to help a traveler who had been attacked by robbers.

This Good Samaritan assisted the victim left for dead on the side of the road, while the two individuals, who walked the road before him, saw the robbery victim and did nothing. They just continued on their way, perhaps out of fear of becoming victims themselves if the attackers were nearby or perhaps to avoid becoming ritually impure by touching the victim.

Everyone familiar with the story knows the point. We have to be like the Good Samaritan. We have to offer assistance to those in need for they are the neighbors we are called to love.

However, there is another way to see this Gospel parable, one that Pope Benedict XVI spoke of during a prayer service with the Bishops of Latin America in March of 2012. The Pope said, "The Church must relive and make present what Jesus was: the Good Samaritan who came from afar, entered our human history, lifted us up and sought to heal us."

With that understanding, it is Jesus, not any of us, who is the Good Samaritan. We are the victim whose life is draining away by the edge of the road.

We are those beaten down by our failings, by our selfish acts, by our failures to live as the good and holy people we promised to be. We are those robbed of our dignity as children of God by evil and sin. We are struggling on the road of life, unable to help ourselves. Laws, rituals, and self-help programs offer hope but they do nothing to raise us up.

It is the Son of God who comes to our rescue. He takes on flesh, and walks the road of life that we travel. When he sees us, he lifts us up. He forgives our sins, he heals our wounds, and he takes us to the inn, he takes us to his Church, where we can continue to be healed and made whole.

While it may be nice to picture ourselves as the Good Samaritan, as the hero of the parable, that is not the case. Jesus is the hero. Jesus is the Savior. Jesus is the Good Samaritan who has come to our rescue.

Without him we would be helpless victims beaten down by the evils that lie in wait as we walk the road of life.

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