

LOOKING TO SUNDAY®

Sunday, July 20, 2025

The Sixteenth 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.

A HELPFUL RECAP

Today many programs on streaming services like Netflix or Amazon Prime tell a story that evolves during a season of six, eight, or more episodes. Often that story continues into several more seasons.

Sometimes an episode begins with a recap that reminds the viewer of what has previously taken place in the developing story.

Every Sunday, as we listen to the Gospel reading at Mass, we might say we are hearing another episode in the ministry of Jesus.

As we "stream" through this story that changed the world, it might be helpful at times to have a recap of what previously happened. Such a recap might be useful in appreciating this Sunday's Gospel passage (Luke 10:38-42).

In last Sunday's Gospel (Luke 10:25-37), Jesus affirmed that if we wish to gain eternal life, we should love God with all our heart, being, strength, and mind and we should love our neighbor as we love ourselves.

Immediately after saying that, Jesus told a parable that illustrated love of neighbor. The parable was about a Samaritan traveler who came to the assistance of a man who had been attacked by robbers and left for dead alongside the road. That Samaritan showed the injured man the kind of love he would want to receive if he were ever in that situation. In that "Good Samaritan," Jesus gave us a concrete example of a person loving a neighbor and also acting as a neighbor to someone in need.

In this Sunday's Gospel, which is composed of the verses that immediately follow last Sunday's reading, Jesus gives us an example of what it means to love God.

In that Gospel, Jesus visits the home of his friends, Mary and Martha, the sisters of Lazarus. We are told that Martha immediately began to serve Jesus and the disciples who were with him. She acted as a good hostess concerned about caring for the needs of her guests. Mary, on the other hand, "sat beside the Lord at his feet listening to him speak." She joined the disciples in listening to Jesus.

When Martha complained about Mary's lack of assistance, Jesus replied, "'Martha, Martha, you are anxious and worried about many things. There is need of only one thing. Mary has chosen the better part and it will not be taken from her.'"

While Martha and Mary each showed love for their guest, Jesus made it clear that what Mary offered him, namely, her undivided attention and the gift of her presence, was most appreciated.

We might say, Jesus held up Mary as the one who showed what it means to love God with all our heart, being, strength, and mind. It means giving God the gift of our undivided time and attention.

Certainly, the Lord Jesus, who could feed thousands of people with a few loaves and fish, did not necessarily need the food that Martha was anxiously preparing. But he did appreciate “the better part” that Mary was giving him. That is something we can give the Lord by “sitting at his feet” in prayer, adoration, worship, listening to the scriptures, and making time to stop and remember that the Lord is with us.

Last Sunday, we were given an example of what it means to love our neighbor. This Sunday we are given an example of what it means to love God. These two Gospel readings, these two “episodes,” go together!

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