

LOOKING TO SUNDAY®

Sunday, July 28, 2019

The Seventeenth 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.

YOU PROMISED!

"But you promised!" Most parents have heard those words from their children.

A teenager asks his father to use the car to go out with his friends on Friday night. The father agrees. But when Friday comes with a forecast for severe weather and dangerous driving conditions, the father refuses to let his son use the car. His son protests, "But you promised!"

A mother goes along with her daughter's plans to have three friends spend the weekend at their home. But on Wednesday the mother learns she has to cover the weekend shift at work. When the mother tells her daughter that plans have to change, she hears, "But you promised!"

Children expect their parents to keep any promise they make, and so do adults. Our civil courts are filled with cases involving alleged broken promises. Renovations not done as described in the contract; work not completed when guaranteed; payments not made on schedule. One party telling another, "But you promised!"

This Sunday's Gospel (Luke 11:1-13) might lead us to tell the Lord the same thing. In that Gospel, Jesus tells us, "Ask and you will receive; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you." In fact, Jesus repeats that promise.

But most of us have asked for things in prayer and not received them.

Most of us have sought for answers and not found the guidance we needed.

Most of us have banged on heaven's door looking for help and found it remained closed.

So we might complain to the Lord, "But you promised!"

In response, Jesus might tell us to consider what he also says in Sunday's Gospel. There Jesus tells a story about a man whose persistent and unrelenting requests motivate a reluctant neighbor to get out of bed and give him the food he needs for an unexpected visitor. Jesus implies that such persistence is required of us as we bring our requests to the Lord.

Furthermore, Jesus never says that our asking, seeking, and knocking will bring an immediate and instant response. Unlike UPS and Fed Ex, God does not provide us with an expected delivery date. God operates according to a schedule known only to him. God answers on his time.

And more importantly, in Sunday's Gospel Jesus tells us the one thing the Father will absolutely give us if we ask. "How much more will the Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him?"

The Holy Spirit draws us into a personal relationship with God, blesses us with wisdom, opens our minds to the truth of God's word, strengthens us as followers of Christ, empowers us to do good, and motivates us to share our faith. The Holy Spirit dwelling within us gives us the grace we need to live as loving children of God.

While we may be confused when our prayers are not answered the way we want, and when we want, God gives us what is most critical.

If we truly appreciated the gift of Holy Spirit, none of would ever complain to God about our unanswered requests. We would never say, "But you promised!"

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