

# **LOOKING TO SUNDAY®**

**Sunday, August 2, 2015**

This email, entitled Looking to Sunday®, focuses on the Gospel Reading 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.

## **BOTH TRUE AND FALSE**

We have all taken tests in which there is a series of statements each followed by the words TRUE or FALSE. After reading a particular statement a student has to decide whether it is correct or incorrect, whether the statement is true or false.

Suppose for a moment, you were taking a religion test based on this Sunday's Gospel Reading (John 6:24-35) and a question read, *In the sixth chapter of John's Gospel, Jesus speaks about himself being the "bread of life." The bread Jesus refers to is the Eucharist in which he gives himself to us. Is this statement True or False?*

For us as Catholics, the answer is an emphatic TRUE. Jesus is the bread of life, the bread from heaven that "gives life to the world."

But suppose the question was worded this way, *In the sixth chapter of John's Gospel, Jesus speaks about himself being the "bread of life." The bread Jesus refers to is only the Eucharist in which he gives himself to us. Is this statement True or False?*

The answer to that question would be FALSE.

Yes, the bread of life that came down from heaven is the Eucharist in which Jesus gives himself to us as food and drink for our spiritual nourishment and growth. But the bread of life has a richer, fuller meaning. It refers not only to the Eucharist but it also refers to the words and teaching that Jesus proclaimed.

In this chapter of John, the miracle of the multiplication of the loaves and fish takes just nine verses to relate and some forty-two verses to explain. It would seem that Jesus felt that teaching the people was as important, or even more important, than simply satisfying their hunger. Body and soul both had to be fed.

That same association of feeding and teaching is found in the very celebration of the Mass. We are told that in the Mass, "The Church is nourished spiritually at the two-fold table of God's word, and of the Eucharist, from the one it grows in wisdom, and from the other in holiness." (#10, Introduction to 1998 Lectionary for Mass)

We come to the altar table to receive the bread of life that is the living Body of Christ, and we come to the table of the word to be nourished with God's life giving Word. As we are told in the Book of Deuteronomy, "That it is not by bread alone that people live, but by all that comes forth from the mouth of the LORD." (Deuteronomy 8:3)

When Jesus speaks about himself as being the bread of life, we need to understand that the bread he offers us is not only his very self but also his teachings – teachings that we are to receive and to make part of our lives. We are not only to eat, but also to listen and believe! "I

am the bread of life; whoever comes to me will never hunger, and whoever believes in me will never thirst.”

We need to broaden our understanding of the bread of life. We need to remember that to think that the bread of life refers only to the Eucharist is FALSE! Jesus offers us even more!

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