

# **LOOKING TO SUNDAY®**

**Sunday, August 3, 2014**

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.

## **DON'T MISS THE OBVIOUS**

*Lord of the Flies*, a novel by William Golding, is about a group of British boys who are marooned on an uninhabited island in the Pacific after their plane crashes. The adults with them are killed in the accident and the boys are left to fend for themselves.

Anyone who has read that book for a high school English class knows it is about more than a plane crash. It is about the conflict between civilization and the urge for power. It is about the difference between rational thought and unbridled emotion. It is about good and evil. It is about paradise and humanity's fall from grace.

Great works of literature have meanings below the surface. That especially applies to the Scriptures, the greatest of all writing, inspired by God.

In this Sunday's Gospel (Matthew 14:13-21), we read about Jesus feeding a crowd of thousands with five loaves and two fish. If we consult any scriptural commentary, we quickly learn there is more to that passage than we might think.

For example, before he feeds them Jesus has the people sit on the grass. That grass recalls Psalm 23 where the shepherd leads those in his charge to green pastures. Jesus is like that caring shepherd.

In feeding the crowd Jesus takes, blesses, breaks, and then gives. The same actions occur at the Last Supper and each time Mass is celebrated. Those actions of Jesus remind us that in the Eucharist he feeds us even more wonderfully than he fed the crowds.

In Sunday's Gospel, Jesus uses seven items, namely, five loaves and two fish. The number seven connotes perfection and completeness in the scriptures. That number also brings to mind the seven sacraments by which the Lord spiritually provides for his people today.

Jesus feeds 5,000 men and uncounted women and children. The large number of those fed and the detail, that after the meal there is more food remaining than there was at the beginning, highlights the miraculous power of Jesus.

Wonderful deep meanings can be found in this Sunday's Gospel. However, in considering those meanings we have to be careful not to miss the obvious message that even someone without faith would appreciate. That message is simply this: Jesus responded to the needs of hungry people and he expects his followers to do so the same. His words in Sunday's Gospel are not just for his disciples, they are also for us. "Give them some food yourselves."

The proof that his command applies to us is seen in the fact that Jesus says that when he comes in glory, his judgment will include how we responded to the hungry. "For I was hungry and you gave me food." (Matthew 25:35).

Of course, confronted with the millions who are hungry in our world, we can feel like the disciples in the Gospel who felt overwhelmed by the needs of the hungry crowd. Yet we *can* do something.

Perhaps like those disciples we can offer our five loaves and two fish. As we shop for our needs we might occasionally purchase five grain items (for example, bread, pasta, cereal) and two fish items (canned tuna for instance) for our local food pantry. Or maybe when we dine at a restaurant we might “buy” an entrée for the hungry by donating the cost of one menu item to Food for the Poor [www.foodforthe poor.org](http://www.foodforthe poor.org) or Catholic Relief Services <http://crs.org/>

Sunday’s Gospel, like all great literature, has more to it than meets the eye. But as we search for deeper meanings, we have to be careful not to miss the obvious message. “Give them some food yourselves.”

© 2014 Rev. Thomas B. Iwanowski