

LOOKING TO SUNDAY®

Sunday, August 5, 2018

The Eighteenth 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.

WHY QUESTIONS

Who? What? When? Where? Why? How? Those six questions are the ones that reporters are taught to ask as they gather information for a story. They are also the questions that detectives ask as they investigate a crime.

Of those six questions, perhaps WHY is the most challenging to answer. Why did some person do what he or she did? The answer is not always obvious.

In last Sunday's Gospel (John 6:1-15), we heard the account of Jesus feeding a crowd of five thousand people with only five loaves and two fish. That miracle so amazed those present that Saint John tells us that the people said of Jesus, "This is truly the Prophet, the one who is to come into the world."

If we consider that Gospel, we know WHO was the main character – it was Jesus. We know WHAT happened – a crowd of thousands was fed. We know WHEN it occurred – after Jesus went across the Sea of Galilee. We know WHERE the feeding took place – in a grassy area near a mountain. And we know HOW – through the miraculous power of Jesus.

The answer to WHY is more complicated. While we can say Jesus acted out of pity and compassion for the hungry crowd, this Sunday's Gospel (John 6:24-35) tells us there is more to the WHY.

On the day after being fed, the crowd comes looking for Jesus. When Jesus sees them he says, "Amen, amen, I say to you, you are looking for me not because you saw signs but because you ate the loaves and were filled."

Jesus challenges the people not to focus on the food he provided, and the food that they hoped to get once again, but on the meaning behind that miraculous feeding.

Jesus had given them bread so they might come to know him as the "bread of life," as the one who gives eternal life to all who believe in him, and as the one who satisfies humanity's hunger and thirst for something more than this material world can offer.

Jesus did not multiply loaves and fish to amaze crowds of people with his power or to alleviate hunger pains; if that were the reason he would have continued to do so. There were many more thousands whose attention had yet to be captured and whose empty stomachs were waiting to be filled.

No, Jesus did what he did in order to provide a sign that would cause people to see him in a new way and ready them to hear his message.

When we look at the multiplication of the loaves and fish, or any miracle of Jesus, we need to look at the WHO, WHAT, WHEN, WHERE, and HOW. But perhaps most of all we need to

consider the WHY. For every miracle is a sign meant to lead us to a deeper understanding of Jesus, "for on him the Father, God, has set his seal."

© 2018 Rev. Thomas B. Iwanowski