

LOOKING TO SUNDAY®

Sunday, August 7, 2016

The Nineteenth 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.

ARRIVING ON SCHEDULE

Buses, trains, planes, subways, and all other methods of public transportation run on fixed schedules.

You do not have to stand on a street corner and wonder when the next bus might come by or go to an airport and hope a plane going to your destination will eventually land and start taking on passengers.

There are definite schedules announcing arrivals and departures of all means of public transportation. If there is a delay or a change in schedule that fact is publicized as quickly as possible.

In this age of smart phones that information is more readily available than ever. There are apps that will let you know the minute the plane, bus, train, subway, light rail or taxi you are waiting for is expected to arrive.

In this Sunday's Gospel (Luke 12:32-48), Jesus speaks of his coming again in glory. He tells a parable that illustrates the importance of being prepared for his arrival. Just as household servants must be prepared for the return of their master from a village wedding, so followers of Jesus must be ready for his return in glory.

Throughout the ages there have been Christians who have announced the time when Jesus would come again, but so far all those scheduled arrivals of the Lord have been proven wrong.

We do not know when the Lord will return any more than we know when a thief might break into our homes. As Jesus warns us, "You also must be prepared, for at an hour you do not expect, the Son of Man will come."

However from another perspective, there actually is an accurate schedule that tells us when the Lord will come. That schedule is found on church signs, parish websites and Facebook pages, Sunday bulletins, and even on church magnets that decorate the household refrigerator. That is the schedule that announces the hours when Mass will be celebrated in our parish.

Each time Mass is celebrated Jesus – the Lord, the Son of God, the Savior, the Redeemer, the Way, the Truth, the Life, the Light of the World –comes to encounter his people. He comes in Word, in Sacrament, in the assembly of the baptized, and in his priest.

We have absolute certainty that the Lord will be present when we gather for Mass and we are guaranteed that he will be right on schedule.

We can look at the Mass in many ways. The Mass is a ritual meal, a sacrifice, an act of worship, a time of praise and thanksgiving, a religious ceremony, and so on. But perhaps we most need to recall the simple truth that the Mass is the time when Jesus comes to be with us.

As people of faith we seek an encounter with God, and we look for places, moments, and experiences when we might have such a personal encounter with the Divine.

Perhaps we need to appreciate that those moments of encounter are readily available. They happen at the hours when Mass is celebrated.

How will we be ready to meet the Lord when he comes in glory at that unexpected time, if we are not regularly meeting him when he comes on schedule?

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