

# **LOOKING TO SUNDAY®**

**Sunday, August 9, 2020**

## ***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.

Looking to Sunday has been published for more than eleven years.

### **WALKING ON WATER**

"So, you think you can walk on water!" We might hear that comment if we attempt something that other people consider to be beyond our talents and abilities.

Many of the people who use that expression might have no idea it is based on one of the miracles of Jesus, a miracle recorded in this Sunday's Gospel. (Matthew 14:22-33)

In that passage we hear how the disciples are struggling against the wind and waves as they attempt to sail across Lake Galilee. Jesus had told them to cross to the other side of the lake while he stayed behind to dismiss the crowd that he had fed with the loaves and fishes. Then "he went up on the mountain by himself to pray."

As they are struggling to get the boat to the shore, Jesus comes to them walking on the water. They are terrified and think they are seeing a ghost. When they realize that it is Jesus, Peter asks Jesus to order him to come to him. Jesus does and Peter takes a few steps onto the sea, but soon he begins to sink. We might imagine his fellow disciples murmuring, "So, you think you can walk on water!"

We might ask ourselves why Jesus came walking on the water in the first place.

Jesus might have done it to bring the disciples to a deeper faith in him. For at the end of the passage they proclaim, "Truly, you are the Son of God."

Yet during his 40 days in the desert when the devil tempted Jesus to prove he was the Son of God by throwing himself from the parapet of the Temple, Jesus refused.

Perhaps Jesus strode across the waves to show his miraculous powers. He could do what others could not.

Yet throughout the Gospels, there are occasions when Jesus tells those who have experienced his miraculous power, to keep it to themselves. For example, after he cures a leper, Jesus tells him, "See that you tell no one anything." (Mark 1:44) When he gives sight to two blind men, we are told "Jesus warned them sternly, 'See that no one knows about this.'" (Matthew 9:30)

Perhaps there is a more obvious reason why Jesus walked on the water. He did what he did so that he could come to the aid of his disciples. When he arrived and stepped into the boat, "the wind died down."

That wondrous event is a reminder that Jesus did the same thing for us. The Son of God took on flesh and came to humanity's rescue as it was being tossed about by evil, selfishness, darkness, and sin.

As Paul tells us, “Christ Jesus, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God something to be grasped. Rather, he emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, coming in human likeness; and found human in appearance, he humbled himself, becoming obedient to death, even death on a cross.” (Philippians 2:6-8)

Or to put it another way, Jesus, the Son of God, came to rescue us not by walking on the waters of the sea but by walking across the gulf between heaven and earth. Jesus walked on the “water” for our sake.

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