

# **LOOKING TO SUNDAY®**

**Sunday, August 10, 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.

## **INTROVERT OR EXTROVERT?**

Myers-Briggs. If you are familiar with that term, it probably means you have completed the Myers-Briggs Personality Inventory. This questionnaire is designed to help people understand how they relate to the world around them and how they arrive at decisions.

The answers people give to some of the questions on the Myers-Briggs reveal whether they are introverts or extroverts. Those terms are not related to shyness but rather to where people find their mental energy.

Introverts tend to draw energy from within themselves and from concepts and ideas. Introverts need time to be alone to recharge their psychic batteries. An introvert would be exhausted by constantly being around people.

Extroverts, on the other hand, draw their energy from people and from what is taking place around them. Extroverts are energized by interacting with people. An extrovert would find it difficult to spend a day alone.

Considering what we know about Jesus we might ask, "Was Jesus an introvert or an extrovert?"

We could certainly make a compelling case that Jesus was a high level extrovert. Jesus called people to follow him. He was surrounded by his disciples. He even chose 12 of them to be especially close to him. He preached to crowds of people, he even fed them when they were hungry so they would not have to leave him to find food.

Jesus went from town to town meeting new people and calling them to change their lives for the Kingdom of God was at hand. He went out of his way to associate with the sick and the hurting, with outcasts and sinners. He spent so much time dealing with people that his relatives thought he was a little crazy. (Mark 3:21).

However, this Sunday's Gospel (Matthew 14:22-33) and other scripture passages might lead us to conclude that Jesus was an introvert. Yes, he liked people, but he needed time to be alone.

In the Gospel passage for this Sunday, which follows Jesus feeding a crowd of thousands with five loaves and two fish, we read, "Jesus made the disciples get into a boat and precede him to the other side, while he dismissed the crowds. After doing so, he went up on the mountain by himself to pray. When it was evening he was there alone."

After interacting with thousands of people, Jesus arranges things so he can be by himself with his thoughts and with his Father in heaven. There are other passages when Jesus takes time to be alone. For example, after his baptism he spends 40 days by himself in the desert and before his arrest he goes to the garden where he separates himself from his apostles.

We might also remember that before Jesus began his public ministry, he spent thirty years in relative obscurity, preparing spiritually and psychologically for what was to come.

Extrovert or introvert? Perhaps Jesus was both. Perhaps it was time as an introvert that allowed him to be the world's most loving, outgoing extrovert.

We might even say that it was time alone with God that enabled Jesus to keep his head above water during his ministry. That time alone empowered him, as we read in this Sunday's Gospel, to even walk upon the raging sea.

If we are to do the work of the Lord, if we are to be those extroverts who share the Good News of the Gospel with others, then like Jesus we need to be introverts who spend time alone with our God. Otherwise, like Peter, we might find ourselves drowning in the swirling busyness of life.

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