

LOOKING TO SUNDAY®
Sunday, August 10, 2025
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 sixteen years.

A MOTIVATING FORCE

Every Sunday Mass includes the Profession of Faith. After the homily, we stand and publicly proclaim our belief in the central doctrines of Christianity.

This can make faith seem like something passive that simply involves assenting to certain dogmatic statements.

However, in this Sunday's Second Reading (Hebrews 11:1-2, 8-19), faith is not passive, rather it is the motivating force that causes Abraham to act.

Faith motivates Abraham to obey God and "to go out to a place that he was to receive as an inheritance."

Faith causes Abraham to stay in that "promised land as in a foreign country, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, heirs of the same promise" as he looked forward to a more permanent home, a "city with foundations."

Faith empowered Abraham to generate "even though he was past the normal age—and Sarah herself was sterile...So it was that there came forth from one man, himself as good as dead, descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky."

Faith even made Abraham "ready to offer his only son, of whom it was said, 'Through Isaac descendants shall bear your name.'"

For Abraham, faith was not a passive set of beliefs, but a force that enabled him to do what God asked. It empowered Abraham to trust in the promises of God and to envision the fulfillment of those promises.

Where did Abraham get such faith? It was not passed on to him by his family. It was not something that he deduced on his own or that he learned from the philosophers of his day.

No, it was God himself who blessed Abraham with the gift of faith. God opened Abraham's mind and heart to his divine presence.

That is equally true in our lives. We believe because God has blessed us with the gift of faith. As we are told in the Catechism of the Catholic Church, "Faith is a gift of God, a supernatural virtue infused by him" (#153). "Faith is an entirely free gift that God makes to man" (#162).

If we respond to that gift from God like Abraham, faith becomes active in our lives.

Faith enables us to recognize God as our Father. It opens our minds to the truth of the Gospel. It moves us to gather with our fellow Catholics for the celebration of Mass. It motivates us to care for the sick and the suffering.

Faith inspires us to strive to bring God's kingdom of love, justice, and peace into our world. It strengthens us to be true to our relationship with God and reminds us, as we are told in the Gospel (Luke 12:32-48), to be "like servants who await their master's return from a wedding, ready to open immediately when he comes and knocks."

Faith is not only something we profess with our words. Faith is a motivating force given to us to direct our actions and to inspire our lives.

© 2025 Rev. Thomas Iwanowski