

# **LOOKING TO SUNDAY®**

**Sunday, August 12, 2018**

## ***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.

### **LISTEN AND LEARN**

We know a great deal about our close friends. We know where they grew up, the schools they attended, their likes and dislikes, their political views, their families, their social lives, their religious beliefs, their hopes and dreams, their favorite restaurants, movies, and sports teams, and much more.

We know about our close friends because we have spent time with them, observed them in various situations, interacted with them, and learned things about them from other people.

We also know those persons who hold a special place in our hearts because they have told us about themselves. They have taken the risk to reveal themselves.

The way we come to know our close friends is also the way we come to know Jesus Christ. We have learned about Jesus by reflecting on Gospel accounts describing how he acted in various situations. We have been told about Jesus by family members, catechists, priests, and by the Church.

But we have also come to know Jesus because he has told us about himself. We have an example of Jesus doing just that in this Sunday's Gospel (John 6:41-51).

In that reading we hear Jesus say, "I am the bread of life. Your ancestors ate the manna in the desert, but they died .... I am the living bread that came down from heaven; whoever eats this bread will live forever."

Jesus tells us that he is "bread" far greater than the manna from heaven given the Jews as they made their way to the Promised Land.

The bread that Jesus speaks of is "living bread." That bread is a personal relationship with him. Such a relationship can be ours since Jesus tells us about himself as the Gospel is proclaimed and the Sacraments are celebrated. He also goes beyond words as he unites us with himself as we share his flesh and blood in the Eucharist.

In Sunday's First Reading (1 Kings 19:4-8), we hear of someone in need of heavenly bread. The Prophet Elijah is so despondent and worn down by the hostility of the King and Queen of Israel that he cries out, "This is enough, O LORD! Take my life, for I am no better than my fathers."

It is only after being nourished by food provided by an angel of God that Elijah can continue his journey to the mountain of the Lord.

In our journey through life, with its ups and downs, with its joys and sorrows, we also need heavenly nourishment. We need the nourishment that comes from a relationship with Jesus Christ.

Food divinely delivered renewed Elijah. Manna from heaven energized the Jews on their trek through the desert. The “living bread,” the relationship that Jesus offers, strengthens us on our journey through this life and it brings us to eternal life.

The Jews at Capernaum thought they knew Jesus. "Is this not Jesus, the son of Joseph? Do we not know his father and mother?"

Yet they did not really know Jesus for they failed to listen and believe what he was telling them about himself.

If we are to have a close relationship with Jesus, a life-giving relationship with Jesus, we need to pay attention to what he is telling us about himself. “I am the living bread that came down from heaven; whoever eats this bread will live forever.”

*© 2018 Rev. Thomas B. Iwanowski*