

# **LOOKING TO SUNDAY®**

**Sunday, August 13, 2017**

## ***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

### **STAYING ON THE BOAT**

What is the meaning of the word, "NAVE?"

If you are familiar with church architecture you might know that the word refers to the area of the church where the congregation gathers for Mass. "Nave" comes from the Latin word *navis* meaning boat. Our English words, "navy" and "naval" are based on that word.

This Sunday's Gospel (Matthew 14: 22-33) may give us an understanding of why that term, nave, might be associated with a particular part of the church building.

In the Gospel we read that after feeding the crowd with the loaves and fish, "Jesus made the disciples get into a boat and precede him to the other side" of the Sea of Galilee. Then he took leave of the crowd and spent time alone in prayer.

While sailing across the sea, the boat carrying the disciples began to be tossed about by the wind and waves. In the midst of that upheaval, Jesus came to the rescue, walking across the water.

He got into the boat and all became calm. The disciples concluded, "Truly, you are the Son of God." They saw Jesus do what only God can do. "God alone stretches out the heavens and treads upon the back of the sea." (Job 9:8)

Today, as disciples of Jesus we have a place in the nave when we gather for Mass, but more importantly, by baptism we have a place in the Catholic Church symbolized by the boat.

But as we know, that boat is being rocked by the wind and waves of sin, scandals, corruption, and the unfaithfulness of some its members and even some of its leaders.

That boat is also being tossed about by the wind and waves of a society that dismisses the idea of a personal and sovereign God, rejects any restrictions on human desires, idolizes the celebrities of the moment, craves ever more possessions and pleasures, and threatens those whose values oppose its own.

Yet that is the boat, that is the Church, in which God has placed us and where he wants us to stay. It is to that storm-tossed boat that Jesus continues to come as his Word is proclaimed, as the Eucharist is shared, and as the Sacraments are celebrated. And that is the boat that Jesus has promised never to abandon to the wind and waves. "And behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age."

Sunday's Gospel tells us to remain in the boat, to continue to find our place in the nave. It also reminds us that Peter only began to sink when he stepped out of the boat.

Our Church may be rocked, pitched about, and shaken, but it is the boat that will take us to “the other side,” that will take us to the kingdom. We need to stay on board!

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