

LOOKING TO SUNDAY®

Sunday, August 17, 2025

The Twentieth 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.

FOCUSING ON SUCCESS

We can work on being a success in life by focusing on people who are successful and learning from them.

For instance, young people whose goal in life is to play professional sports would be wise to focus their attention on players they admire and learn how these players achieved success.

How often did they practice? Did they find specific exercise routines especially helpful? Who were their coaches and trainers? Did they eat certain foods or take nutritional supplements to enhance their performance? How many hours a night did they sleep? Did they seek advice from doctors specializing in sports medicine? Did they have personal rituals that helped them mentally prepare for a game?

Of course, aspiring athletes would also watch these top-level players in action and pay special attention to their winning techniques and plays.

Focusing on people who are successful in the field of sports and learning from their example can help young people move forward in their athletic careers.

This is true not only in sports, it is also true in business, politics, acting, cooking, investing, podcasting, raising children, or any human endeavor. We can learn how to succeed in these areas by focusing our attention on people who are successful, watching what they do, and learning from their example.

The same thing is true in our spiritual lives. If we hope to have a vibrant spiritual life and grow in our relationship with God, we need to focus our attention on holy people and learn from them.

There is no better person on which to focus our attention than Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. As the writer of the Letter to the Hebrews tells us in Sunday's Second Reading (Hebrews 12:1-4), "Let us ... persevere in running the race that lies before us while keeping our eyes fixed on Jesus, the leader and perfecter of faith."

We need to focus our attention on Jesus and learn from him. As Jesus himself tells us, "Come to me, all you who labor and are burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me" (Matthew 11:28-29).

If we fix our eyes on Jesus, we learn that those who succeed spiritually make time for personal prayer and for communal prayer as well. Jesus would withdraw to solitary places to spend time alone with his heavenly Father, and he would also go to the synagogue and the Temple to worship with others.

If we focus on Jesus, we see that if we want to grow spiritually, we need to demonstrate our love for God by the way we help those who are struggling and in pain. As Jesus showed us, love of God and love of neighbor cannot be separated.

If we focus on the life and teachings of Jesus, we discover the meaning and purpose of our lives and the way to eternal life. We also learn that following the teachings of Jesus Christ in a society darkened by self-centeredness, materialism, relativism, and sin may separate us from others. Jesus tells us that in Sunday's Gospel (Luke 12:49-53). "Do you think that I have come to establish peace on the earth? No, I tell you, but rather division."

If we focus on Jesus, we will see that he is with us in the Scriptures, in the celebration of the Sacraments, in the Bread and Wine of Eucharist, in the Community of the Church, and in the Holy Spirit who dwells within us.

Focusing on Jesus and learning from Him is the surest way to succeed in having a vibrant spiritual life.

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