

LOOKING TO SUNDAY®

Sunday, September 22, 2019

The Twenty-Fifth 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 ten years.

ACCOUNTING REQUIRED

Suppose for a moment that you were the treasurer of a large business. As such you were responsible for all deposits and disbursements, for managing the payroll account, for preparing the firm's annual reports, and handling all financial matters related to the business.

But rather than being an honest and trustworthy employee, you were stealing from the company. Each month you found a creative way to "pay yourself" a little extra on the side.

Consider how you would react if the owner of the firm suddenly announced that a team of forensic accountants would be coming to audit the books. You would immediately begin worrying about your future.

That is what happens in this Sunday's Gospel (Luke 16:1-13). Jesus tells a parable about a rich man who learns that his steward is stealing and squandering the property he is supposed to be managing.

So the master confronts the steward. "What is this I hear about you? Prepare a full account of your stewardship, because you can no longer be my steward."

The master demands an accounting. Realizing he has been found out the dishonest steward tries to provide for his future by continuing to cheat his master.

When the wealthy master discovers what his steward is doing, rather than becoming even more furious, Jesus says, "The master commended that dishonest steward for acting prudently."

The master praised his steward not for his dishonesty, but for having the wisdom to act decisively. For as he had been told, his stewardship was about to come to an end.

It was that steward's wisdom and far-sightedness that Jesus commends in that parable. Those are qualities we are to have, for like that man we too are in the position of being stewards.

God, our master, has placed his earth and his Church, as well as our families and the poor and suffering who cross our paths, into our care. God has also given us talents and abilities, occasions and opportunities, and financial and material resources to fulfill our duties as his stewards.

But we often fail in our responsibilities as stewards. Rather than doing what God expects of us, we do what we think is better for us. We look out for our own interests rather than for those of the Lord.

But consider if we heard the words the steward heard in today's parable, "Prepare a full account of your stewardship." Certainly those words would make us look at our lives and force us to see the occasions when we acted like that dishonest steward. We did what benefited us rather than what benefited the coming of God's kingdom. We followed our will rather than the will of our Divine Master.

Imagine if we began each day by considering what our Master expects of us and closed each day by considering what account we could give our Master for our stewardship that day.

The more we remember the words of the master in this Sunday's parable, the better stewards of the Lord we will be. "Prepare a full account of your stewardship." We need to be always ready to hear those words!

2019 Rev. Thomas B. Iwanowski