

LOOKING TO SUNDAY®

Sunday, September 28, 2014

This email, entitled Looking to Sunday®, focuses on the Gospel Reading 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.

THE MIDTERM ELECTION

The midterm election season is now in high gear. Republican, Democrat, and independent candidates are campaigning hard for votes so they can win seats in the House of Representatives or the Senate.

While campaigning, those running for office are all saying the same thing. They are saying what they believe the majority of voters want to hear. After all, people do not cast their ballots for candidates whose ideas and positions are opposed to their own.

But as we all know, what politicians say when they are running for office does not always match what they do when they are elected. A "Yes" in September can change to a "No" in January.

In Sunday's Gospel (Matthew 21:28-32), we meet two sons who act like politicians. They change their minds – one for the better, the other for the worse.

A father asks both of his sons to go and work in the family vineyard. The first son says, "No," but he later goes. His "No" becomes a "Yes."

The second son immediately says, "Yes." He gives the answer his father expects but then he does nothing. That son's "Yes" becomes a "No."

Only the first son fulfills his father's request. While his initial response is negative, he changes his mind and obeys his father. The second son never does what he says he will do. Even when he sees his brother working in the vineyard, that son's "Yes" remains an unfulfilled promise.

In relating that parable, Jesus accuses the scribes and Pharisees of being like that second son. Like him, they say the right words but never carry them out. At the same time Jesus praises the sinners, the tax collectors and the prostitutes who, at the preaching of John the Baptist, repented of their refusal to live as God commanded. They were now in the "vineyard" seeking to do God's will.

Today's parable and this current election season challenge us to examine our words, our promises, to God. Is the "Yes" that we so easily tell God in our prayers and at Mass being carried out in the vineyard of our daily life? Or do our fine words remain just that – fine words?

If our actions do not match our words, there is hope. With the help of God we can change for the better. We have proof of that in the repentant tax collectors and prostitutes whom Jesus praises in Sunday's Gospel.

If we honestly look at our responses to God we may discover we have more in common with campaigning candidates than we might think!

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