

LOOKING TO SUNDAY®

Sunday, October 11, 2020

The Twenty-Eighth 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 eleven years.

KEEPING PROMISES

We expect people to keep their word, to keep their promises.

If parents tell their children that the family will go to Disney World during the Christmas holidays, those children will expect that to happen. If it does not, those parents are sure to hear, "But you promised!"

If an employee is informed by his or her supervisor that a promotion is coming within the next six months, that employee will wait with anticipation for the promotion to be announced. If that fails to happen, that employee will complain, "But you promised."

Candidates running for office make commitments concerning taxes and changes in policy. If those candidates win, voters expect them to fulfill those campaign pledges. If they do not, the voters will certainly remind them "But you promised."

In this Sunday's Gospel (Matthew 22:1-14), we hear about a king who might have said those same words to those who never came to his son's wedding banquet. "But you promised."

In that parable, the king sent his servants to tell those invited that it was time to arrive. Obviously, they had already promised to come, otherwise, their names would not have been given to the servants.

Since food had to be prepared, the king would have known how many people were expected for the feast. He would have received a certain number of RSVPs. The king had his servants tell those expected guests, "Behold, I have prepared my banquet, my calves and fattened cattle are killed, and everything is ready; come to the feast."

However, those who had promised to come, did not. In fact, they mistreated and even murdered the servants sent to them.

As Jesus tells us, the king was so enraged at what was done to his servants and at the refusal of the guests to come, that he "sent his troops, destroyed those murderers, and burned their city." Their failure to do as they promised led to their destruction.

Jesus addressed that parable to the chief priests and elders who were not being faithful to their promises and commitments, and who were rejecting his words, just as they had rejected the words of the prophets who came before him.

But that parable, like all the words of Jesus, is also addressed to us. The Lord has invited us to a heavenly banquet like that described in today's First Reading (Isaiah 25:6-10). "On this mountain the LORD of hosts will provide for all peoples a feast of rich food and choice wines, juicy, rich food and pure, choice wines."

We promised that we would show up at that heavenly banquet at our baptism. Then and there we promised that we would reject sin and evil, that we would live as faithful children of God, and that we would gather for Mass to hear God's Word and to share in the Eucharist – the supper of the Lamb that prepares us for the banquet of heaven. We renew those baptismal promises each Easter Sunday.

One day, all of us will stand before the Lord who will judge us according to how well we kept our commitments to him. May God never say to us, "But you promised!"

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