

LOOKING TO SUNDAY®

Sunday, October 21, 2018

The Twenty-Ninth 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.

SEEKING POWER & POSITION

In this election season there are all kinds of people running for office.

There are incumbents seeking re-election and newcomers to politics who have never been on a ballot before.

There are those affiliated with the Republican Party or the Democratic Party.

There are liberals, conservatives, libertarians, socialists, and progressives.

There are men and women, young and old.

There are candidates campaigning on a variety of issues such as national security, immigration, economic inequality, climate change, health care, and issues of life.

But as different as these candidates are, they all have one trait in common. They are all ambitious. They want to achieve positions of power and influence.

If these candidates were not driven by ambition they would not be able to give the time, energy, and financial resources necessary to win an election.

Nor would they be able to endure the frustration, disappointments, aggravation, hateful comments, and attempts at character assassination that come with being a candidate in today's world of politics.

Ambitious for power and influence, candidates put up with a great deal, so much so, that most people would never bother to seek elective office.

In this Sunday's Gospel (Mark 10:35-45), we meet two disciples, James and John, who are seeking power and influence. They want the top positions in Jesus's coming kingdom. "Grant that in your glory we may sit one at your right and the other at your left."

While James and John were ambitious, they obviously were not very good listeners. Just before they asked Jesus for positions of power and glory, Jesus had been speaking for the third time about his coming suffering and death.

The other disciples "became indignant at James and John" when they heard their request. But perhaps their anger and displeasure came not from the actual request, but more from the fact they were not first in seeking a place of honor.

In response, Jesus says that his followers are not to be ambitious for positions of power and authority but rather for opportunities to be of service. As he says, "those who are recognized as rulers over the Gentiles lord it over them but it shall not be so among you."

During this political season as candidates give of their time, energy, and resources to win elections, Sunday's Gospel reminds us that we are to use the blessings that God has given us to be of service to others.

Those who serve others as Jesus commands will win the election that really counts. They will be given a place in the kingdom of God. "Whoever wishes to be first among you will be the slave of all. For the Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many."

© 2018 Rev. Thomas B. Iwanowski