

LOOKING TO SUNDAY®
Sunday, October 26, 2025
The Thirtieth 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.

WE'RE GOOD!

Are you a righteous person? Are you a good human being?

The Pharisee, who is spoken about in this Sunday's Gospel (Luke 18:9-14), would certainly have answered with a resounding YES. He judged himself to be a righteous man, one very different from the tax collector who stood behind him in the Temple—a man who worked for the hated Romans and lined his pockets by collecting more than was assessed.

That Pharisee was among the people that Jesus described as “convinced of their own righteousness.” The Pharisee confidently stood before God in the Temple and asserted he was “not like the rest of humanity.” He was not greedy, dishonest or adulterous. He boasted that he did more than God required. He voluntarily fasted twice a week and he paid tithes on his whole income.

If someone were to ask us if we were good and righteous, we might think of ourselves just as the Pharisee did. After all, we are good Christians. We believe in God. We accept Jesus as our Savior. We pray. We go to Mass, perhaps not every Sunday, but often. We try to be nice to people. We donate to the Church. We give to charitable causes. We make sure our children receive the Sacraments.

We live at time where Pharisees abound, where people are “convinced of their own righteousness,” and see little need to call upon the mercy of the Lord.

However, the tax collector did not see himself that way. Rather, he beat his breast, and simply prayed, “O God, be merciful to me a sinner.”

We need to remember that we are like that tax collector. We are sinners who need to call upon the mercy of God. We are reminded of this at every Mass. In the Act of Penitence at the beginning of Mass, we confess to almighty God that we have greatly sinned in our words and actions, and then we plead “Lord, have mercy.” During the Our Father, we ask God to “forgive us our trespasses.” Then just before Holy Communion, we admit, “Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof, but only say the word and my soul shall be healed.”

We most clearly are reminded that we are like that tax collector when we confess our sins in the Sacrament of Penance.

That day in the Temple, the tax collector, who humbly admitted how he stood before God, went home justified and set right with the Lord. But the Pharisee left the same way he arrived: he returned home satisfied with himself, blind to his sins, and wrongly convinced of his

righteousness before God. As Jesus reminds us, “Whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and the one who humbles himself will be exalted.”

© 2025 Rev. Thomas Iwanowski