

LOOKING TO SUNDAY®

Sunday, November 1, 2015

All Saints Day

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.

DO THIS FOR SUCCESS

To achieve success in any field requires hard work, sacrifice, dedication, and the willingness to meet and even exceed certain requirements.

If someone wants to become a successful athlete, that person has to exercise, learn the rules of the game, listen to the advice of the coach, memorize the various plays, practice, eat right, get enough sleep, stay motivated, work hard, and remain focused.

Similar demands fall upon the individual whose dream is to become a successful surgeon. That person has to do well in high school and college, graduate from medical school, obtain a license, complete a residency, obtain board certification, and be admitted into a respected practice or hospital.

Today, we as a Church honor all those people throughout the ages who achieved success as Christians, who became saints – those officially recognized by the Church, those admired as such by their relatives and friends, and those known only to God.

Joining the company of those saints is the goal of every Christian. Every Christian hopes to be welcomed to the kingdom of heaven and to be part of that "great multitude" described in the Book of Revelation, "from every nation, race, people, and tongue" that stands before the throne of God.

In this Sunday's Gospel (Matthew 5:1-12), we hear the beginning of Jesus' Sermon on the Mount. Living according to the words of Jesus found in that sermon and throughout the Gospels will gradually transform us into those good and holy persons God wishes us to be.

But Jesus shows us how to be successful Christians not only by his words but also by giving us his Holy Spirit. The Spirit of God, who guided Jesus in his life and that has guided the Church over the centuries, was given to us at our Baptism and Confirmation. If we are attentive to the working of the Spirit in our lives we will one day join that "great multitude" of successful Christians we honor this Sunday, All Saints Day.

For example, the Spirit of God is at work in our lives when we read a request in the parish bulletin and we think, "I could do that." When we see a person at work or in school obviously upset, and we feel moved to offer a word of comfort and support. When we are about to discard a letter appealing for funds to assist the suffering, and we are moved to take a second look. When a line in a homily pricks our conscience and we realize that message is meant for us. When we are faced with a moral decision, and suddenly a pertinent quote of Jesus comes to mind.

When such things happen, the Spirit of Jesus is at work, guiding, directing, and encouraging us to take the path that leads to sainthood.

Successful Christians are those who follow the words of Jesus found in the Sermon on the Mount. Successful Christians are also those who recognize those everyday inspirations of the Holy Spirit and who follow them!

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