

LOOKING TO SUNDAY®

Sunday, November 8, 2015

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.

IT MADE A DIFFERENCE

When a non-profit organization, such as a church or a local charity, needs to raise money to support its work or to pay for capital improvements, that organization usually runs a fundraising campaign.

The campaign involves making a case for why the funds are needed, setting a realistic yet ambitious goal, reaching out to donors, and then creating some sort of visual display to illustrate how the fundraising is going.

Often that visual display involves a thermometer whose markings go from zero up to the announced goal. As funds are collected, the red coloring in the thermometer begins to gradually ascend to the desired amount. If all goes as hoped, the goal is met and exceeded, and the red in the thermometer bursts upward in an eruption of success!

In Sunday's Gospel (Mark 12:38-44), we hear about an ongoing fundraising campaign taking place to support the temple in Jerusalem.

Mark tells us that Jesus observed people making their contributions to the temple treasury. The rich came forward and made substantial donations that would make the red in any fundraising thermometer shoot upward.

Then a poor widow came along and dropped in "two small coins worth a few cents." However, Jesus valued her small gift more than the substantial ones made by the wealthy.

While the poor widow's donation would make no difference to any fundraising campaign and not even register on any visual display of contributions, her few coins made a big difference in her life. As Jesus remarked, "she, from her poverty, has contributed all she had, her whole livelihood."

While the substantial contributions of the wealthy would excite any fundraising advisor, those gifts did not affect the lifestyle of those donors. As Jesus said, "they have all contributed from their surplus wealth." They gave what they did not need. Their giving involved no sacrifice on their part.

In Sunday's Gospel, Jesus teaches us that it is not the amount of our gift that matters, but rather the amount of sacrifice it takes for us to make that gift.

If we all gave as the widow did—until it hurt—we would imitate the woman's generosity, we would positively affect those in need, and we would imitate the generosity of Jesus who sacrificed all he had for us. His giving certainly made a difference to him and a difference to all humanity.

We might conclude that if, like the wealthy of the Gospel, we give only what we will never miss, what never demands any sacrifice on our part, then our giving is not worth very much.

