

LOOKING TO SUNDAY®

Sunday, November 10, 2019

The Thirty-Second 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 ten years.

THE FUTURE DETERMINES

What we believe about the future, determines how we live in the present.

For example, if we hold stock in a company and we believe that firm is about to introduce a product that will be a best seller, we will likely buy additional stock. But if we believe that the new product will be an absolute failure, we will sell our shares.

If we believe that robotics will eliminate certain jobs in the future, we will steer our children away from considering such jobs. Instead we will guide them to professions whose futures are more secure.

In both cases, what we think will happen in the future, determines how we act today.

We see can see that in this Sunday's scripture readings.

In our First Reading (2 Maccabees 7:1-2, 9-14) we hear of a Jewish mother and her seven sons who are cruelly tortured on orders of the pagan king, Antiochus, because they refused to eat pork and thereby violate God's law.

They were willing to undergo horrendous tortures and death because they believed that God would raise them up. As one of the brothers told those torturing him, "It is my choice to die at the hands of men with the hope God gives of being raised up by him; but for you, there will be no resurrection to life."

It was their firm conviction about the future that gave the brothers and their mother the strength and courage to endure the horror of the moment.

In the Gospel (Luke 20:27-38), the Sadducees, unlike those seven brothers, believed there was nothing beyond death.

They try to prove the absurdity of thinking that life continued in some resurrected form by asking Jesus about a woman who was married to seven brothers in a row. The first brother died, so she married the second brother to raise up children to carry on the family name, but he died. That happened seven times in succession, then she died. The Sadducees wanted to know in the life to come, whose wife would she be.

Their belief that human life was annihilated by death and their inability to conceive of any form of life beyond what they experienced, led them to reject the concept of resurrection and to reject the one who would proclaim, "I am the resurrection and the life; whoever believes in me, even if he dies, will live." (John 11:25)

Today, it seems there are more people than ever who think like the Sadducees. They believe that life is only what is experienced here.

Such an absence of a belief in the resurrection leads them to judge things only from the perspective of this life. Their decisions are based on the moment and not on the eternity of moments to follow.

If the mother and her seven sons had not believed that in the future God would reward their faithfulness, they most likely would have done what Antiochus demanded.

If the Sadducees had believed in the idea of resurrection and of a life to come, they would not have rejected the message of Jesus.

What we believe about the future determines how we act. It affects our decisions about investments and careers, and far more importantly, it shapes the moral decisions we make and the beliefs we embrace.

To put it simply, what we believe about tomorrow, determines how we act today.

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