

LOOKING TO SUNDAY®

Sunday, November 15, 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.

ALL GENERATIONS

Sometimes a line appears in a particular Gospel passage that may indicate there is more to the reading than we might think. That is certainly true in this Sunday's Gospel (13:24-32).

In that passage Jesus speaks about what will happen in "those days." He says, "the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will be falling from the sky, and the powers in the heavens will be shaken."

Following those traumatic events, people "will see 'the Son of Man coming in the clouds' with great power and glory."

We usually understand that passage as referring to the end of time when Jesus will return in triumph. No one knows the day or the hour so we must be prepared.

However, in that passage Jesus also says, "Amen, I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all these things have taken place."

To keep the passage focused only on the future we must interpret "generation" as referring to all of humanity. But perhaps "generation" means just what it says. In that case, Jesus was saying that the events he was speaking about would occur in the lifetime of those who heard his words. And they did.

That first Good Friday, the world fell apart for those first disciples of Jesus. For them the powers of heaven were shaken and darkness reigned. We read in Matthew's account of the Passion, "from noon onward, darkness came over the whole land." Then when Jesus died, "the veil of the sanctuary was torn in two from top to bottom. The earth quaked, rocks were split."

On Easter Sunday and in the days that followed the disciples saw "the Son of Man coming in the clouds with great power and glory" as the Risen Lord appeared to them. With his coming from the tomb, the elect began to be gathered and the Church was born.

In addition, the words, "this generation will not pass away until all these things have taken place" can also mean the passage applies to us, to our generation. For we are living in a time when horrific events that shake humanity and darken our world are reported each day – terrorism, wars, brutality, the persecution of Christians, natural disasters, mass migrations, economic insecurity, abortion, euthanasia, corruption, moral relativism, etc.

Yet despite those tribulations, for those who see with the eyes of faith, Jesus continues to come in glory. He comes to us through his word, through the sacraments, and through his Church, and he continues to "gather his elect from the four winds, from the end of the earth to the end of the sky." The Lord Jesus continues to draw people to himself.

Sunday's Gospel has a message that applies not only to the future, but also to the past and the present as well. God's word is for all times. God's word is for all generations.

