

LOOKING TO SUNDAY®

Sunday, November 22, 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.

A GOOD ENDING

Whenever a candidate running for elective office gives a speech he attempts to end with memorable words that will motivate his listeners to vote for him.

When an author brings her novel to a close she does so in a way that brings all the threads of her story together and resolves things in a credible way,

When chefs prepare a banquet they make sure that one course builds upon another, that flavors do not clash, and that the meal ends on a high note.

Good endings are important!

This Sunday, the Solemnity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe, is the last Sunday of the liturgical year of 2015. Its Gospel reading (John 18:33-37) makes a good ending to this cycle of 52 Sunday readings.

In this Gospel Jesus stands accused before Pontius Pilate, the representative of worldly and material power. Jesus boldly declares that he is no earthly king. The kingdom he rules does not belong to this world. The truth he preaches does not depend upon human wisdom.

We have heard similar messages proclaimed in the Sunday Gospels throughout this liturgical year.

In those Gospel readings, Jesus was portrayed not as a ruler who sought power, who imposed his will on others, and used coercion and intimidation to gain followers. Rather he was the humble servant, the compassionate and merciful teacher.

Jesus was not depicted as a ruler eager to conquer lands, to gain wealth, and to raise armies to protect his kingdom, but as a ruler hungry to have a place in the hearts of those who heard his words, especially the poor, the rejected, and the defenseless. He was seen as opposing all those who sought kingdoms founded on power, celebrity, and material wealth. "My kingdom does not belong to this world."

Jesus was not pictured as preaching a message that received approving nods from the powerful and well-connected, but one that left them feeling uncomfortable and angry. He spoke words of truth that revealed the meaning and purpose of life and the values and priorities that God sets for his people.

As this liturgical year comes to an end, the Church in her wisdom has chosen a Gospel that brings together all that we have heard these past 12 months.

Sunday's Gospel makes a good ending to a powerful set of messages!

© 2015 Rev. Thomas B. Iwanowski