

LOOKING TO SUNDAY®

Sunday, December 1, 2019

The First Sunday of Advent

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 eleven years.

ALREADY READY?

"Are you ready for Christmas?" That is a common question at this time of year.

It will be asked even more frequently this season for Christmas seems to be coming more quickly than usual. That is the case because typically there is a week or so between Thanksgiving and December 1.

However this year, the fourth Thursday of November, Thanksgiving Day, is the 28th of the month, the latest date possible for the holiday. That means the month of December begins just two days after we clear our Thanksgiving table.

So, "Are you ready for Christmas?"

Have you selected the people who will receive gifts from you this year? Are those gifts already ordered or purchased? Are they wrapped? Are your Christmas cards written out, addressed, and ready to mail? Is your home decorated for the coming holiday? Have you decided where you will spend Christmas Eve and Christmas Day? Have you thought about the people you will invite to your home? Are your finances ready to handle your holiday expenses?

"Are you ready for Christmas?" For most people, the answer is NO.

Christmas always has a way of sneaking up on us, especially this year. But the advertising and media world are working overtime to remind us to get ready. Even the lighting of the candles of the Advent Wreath can be a reminder of the decreasing number of weeks to prepare for Christmas Day – more light, less time!

In this Sunday's Gospel (Matthew 24:37-44), Jesus is also at work, warning us to be ready for his coming. That requires continuous effort on our part since, unlike the date of Christmas, the date of the Lord's arrival at the end of time and at the end of our lives is not marked on any human calendar.

How much time we have to ready ourselves to meet the Lord remains unknown. That being the case Jesus tells us that we "must be prepared, for at an hour you do not expect, the Son of Man will come."

We see that lack of preparation in the Gospel where we read, "Two men will be out in the field; one will be taken, and one will be left. Two women will be grinding at the mill; one will be taken, and one will be left." In that example, only half of the people are ready to be taken into God's kingdom, the rest are left behind in their sinful state.

We ready ourselves for the day of the Lord's coming by following the advice Paul gives us in this Sunday's Second Reading (Romans 13:11-14). "Let us then throw off the works of darkness and

put on the armor of light; let us conduct ourselves properly as in the day, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in promiscuity and lust, not in rivalry and jealousy.” We are to live in the light of the Gospel and follow the example of Jesus. We are, as Paul tells us, to “put on the Lord Jesus Christ.”

During the coming days whenever we are asked “Are you ready for Christmas?” we should picture ourselves being asked the more important question, “Are you ready for Christ?”

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