

LOOKING TO SUNDAY®

Sunday, December 6, 2015

The Second 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.

A SENSE OF TIMING

Successful people and successful companies have a sense of timing. They seem to know the right time to act.

We certainly see that borne out when it comes to investing in stocks, bonds, and commodities. Those who are successful investors carefully consider when to buy, when to sell, and when to sit on the sidelines and do nothing as the market wildly gyrates.

The same thing holds true for companies that succeed in business. They study, analyze, and research the best time to announce an acquisition, to introduce a new product, to hold a sale, and even the right moment to announce disappointing earnings so the news will be least noticed.

Those who succeed in life do not act haphazardly without thinking; they have a sense of timing and they have a plan in mind.

God also has a sense of timing and a plan when it comes to dealing with his people. God decides the time and place when he will act.

That is very evident in this Sunday's Gospel (Luke 3:1-6). There we read about the ministry of John the Baptist.

Luke tells us the names of political and religious leaders who were in power when John began preparing the way for the coming Messiah. That information lets us know that John started his ministry around the year 27 AD "in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, and Herod was tetrarch of Galilee ... during the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas."

Furthermore, Luke tells us where John preached. He "went throughout the whole region of the Jordan."

But it was not John's decision to act at that particular time or in that particular place – it was God's. In the Gospel of Luke it is evident that God acted at a definite time in the lives of Zechariah and Elizabeth to bring about the birth of John the Baptist, just as he acted in the life of Mary to bring forth the Messiah.

God had a plan of a salvation and that plan not only included definite people and places, it included definite times.

If God had a sense of timing when it came to John and Jesus and to all the figures in the scriptures, can't we conclude that God has a sense of timing when it comes to us?

Is the fact that we are alive at this time and in this place purely a random act of chance outside of the control of God, or are we here at this time, on this day, according to God's good timing?

Advent is the perfect season for us to consider how God acted in human history and in accordance with his timing to bring about the birth of the Messiah.

Advent is also the perfect season for us to notice how God is working in our lives to bring us closer to him. Through the words of John the Baptist, we are being challenged to "prepare the way of the Lord, make straight his paths."

Furthermore, this Advent season stands out for another reason. It brings us the beginning of the Holy Year of Mercy announced by Pope Francis. A year that will offer us opportunities to grow in our appreciation of the mercy, forgiveness, and personal love that God has for each us.

The fact that we are alive this Advent season is no accident. God has a sense of timing and that timing includes us!

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