

LOOKING TO SUNDAY®

Sunday, December 7, 2014

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.

NO SELFIE

John the Baptist would never have taken a selfie!

That is one conclusion we can draw from this Sunday's Gospel (Mark 1:1-8) for the Second Sunday of Advent.

John the Baptist was not interested in himself or in the opinion of others. He was not a person who would have been uploading selfies, posting pictures of his meals on Facebook, sending out tweets, and spending hours each day alerting the social world to his every thought and activity.

John the Baptist had no desire to draw attention to himself, rather his desire was to fulfill his mission. A mission that so absorbed him that John cared little about what he wore or what he ate. Someone living in the desert, "clothed in camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist" and surviving on "locusts and wild honey" had something far more pressing on his mind than food, clothing and shelter.

John's mission was to prepare the way of the Lord by proclaiming a baptism of repentance. He called people to turn away from the sin and selfishness that had hardened their hearts so that they might be ready to welcome the far mightier one who was coming after him. The one who would bring people into a new, personal relationship with God. As John said, "I have baptized you with water; he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."

The mission of John, which was the first thing Mark wrote about in his Gospel, was to break into the consciousness of the people of his day and alert them to the coming of the long awaited Messiah. Today as this Gospel is proclaimed, John continues that mission. He reminds us that the Jesus who came to the people of Israel that first Advent and who will come again in glory at the end of time continues to come to those who are ready and prepared to receive him.

But to receive the Lord we need to turn away from those actions that contradict the values of the Gospel, and we also have to be more like John the Baptist. We need to be less self-absorbed, less self-centered, and less narcissistic. If we are so concerned with ourselves, we will never have the time to notice the Lord or the poor and suffering in whose company he is so often found.

John the Baptist might warn us that the more selfies we take, the more self-absorbed we are, the greater the chance that we will miss the Lord who wants to come into our lives.

© 2014 Rev. Thomas B. Iwanowski