

LOOKING TO SUNDAY®

Sunday, December 8, 2024

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.

Looking to Sunday has been published for more than fifteen years.

COMPLETING A GOOD WORK

"May God who has begun the good work in you bring it to fulfillment." These words are spoken by a bishop as he ordains a man to the diaconate or the priesthood.

At one point in the ceremony, each man being ordained kneels before the bishop. He places his folded hands into the hands of the bishop and promises him and his successors respect and obedience.

The bishop then says, "May God who has begun the good work in you bring it to fulfillment." The bishop prays that the one being ordained will be true to his vocation and continue to grow in his relationship with Christ and in his service to the Church.

The words spoken by the bishop are based on this Sunday's Second Reading (Philippians 1:4-6, 8-11). In his letter to the Philippians, Saint Paul says, "Brothers and sisters...I am confident of this, that the one who began a good work in you will continue to complete it until the day of Christ Jesus."

Paul then prays that God who blessed the Philippians with the gift of faith will continue to work in their lives so they will grow in love, discern what is of value, and be filled with righteousness.

The words of Paul addressed to the Philippians and used in the rite of ordination also apply to us, for God has begun a good work in us.

This work began at our baptism when God brought us into a relationship with him and made us part of his Church. That work of God continued as we received the sacraments, listened to his saving word, and joined with our fellow Christians in giving him praise and worship and in living the Gospel.

God has worked in our lives and wishes to continue his work. For that to happen, we need to let God work in us. As Pope Francis recently said, "We must allow ourselves to be transformed by the power of God's love, which is greater than us and makes us capable of loving even beyond what we thought we were capable of." (November 14, 2024 audience organized by the Dicastery for the Cause of Saints)

We are Christians because of what God has done in our lives. As Paul reminds us, "For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not from you; it is the gift of God" (Ephesians 2:8).

May we truly allow God's grace to influence our lives so that God who has begun the good work in us will bring it to fulfillment.

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