

LOOKING TO SUNDAY®

Sunday, December 21, 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.

DIVINE CASTING

Every movie contains a listing of the people involved in making the film. That list includes the director, the writers, the producers, the editors, the actors, the film crew, the lighting and sound experts, the makeup and costume professionals, the stunt persons, and more. At the conclusion of many films, it often takes several minutes for the credits to roll across the screen.

One of the key people involved in any film, and one often overlooked, is the casting director. This person is responsible for finding actors to fill the various roles in a film. The casting director reads the script, speaks to those involved with planning the production, imagines the type of actors needed for the movie, and then conducts auditions and interviews to come up with the right people to bring the script to life.

In this Sunday's Gospel (Luke 1:26-38), we see someone being chosen for a pivotal role in the drama of salvation. God, who might be seen as the ultimate casting director, sends the angel Gabriel to announce to Mary that she has been chosen to be the mother of the "Son of the Most High." As the angel tells Mary, she has "found favor with God." She is "full of grace" and worthy to give birth to the one who would "rule over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end."

Mary initially feels she is unable to accept this role since she has had "no relations with a man." However, the angel assures her that God would wonderfully solve this dilemma through the overshadowing of the Holy Spirit.

Then, as if to assure Mary that all would work out as described, the angel tells her what God was already doing in the life of her cousin Elizabeth. As Mary is reminded, "nothing will be impossible for God."

As we know, Mary, with the help of God, magnificently fulfilled the role she was given. The feasts of the coming Christmas Season show Mary playing her part as the mother of the Savior.

God's choice of Mary also reminds us that God has chosen us for roles in the continuing drama of salvation. The sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist that give us our identity as Christians also give us the roles that God expects us to fulfill. Our role, our mission, is to hasten the coming of God's kingdom of love, justice, and peace by living as faithful disciples of Jesus Christ.

God, who cast Mary for a starring role in the drama of salvation, has chosen us to be part of the cast that continues to proclaim the Good News of the Gospel and helps to make Jesus Christ present in our day.

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Best Wishes for a Joyful Christmas Season!