

## **LOOKING TO SUNDAY®**

**Sunday, December 23, 2018**

***The Fourth 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.

### **HOW DOES IT HAPPEN?**

*Mary set out and traveled to the hill country in haste to a town of Judah where she entered the house of Zachariah and greeted Elizabeth.*

Those words found in this Sunday's Gospel (Luke 1:39-45), tell us that after being informed that Elizabeth her kinswoman was with child, Mary immediately set out to visit her.

While we may imagine Mary quickly going a few miles to the home of her relatives, that was not the case.

The distance Mary had to travel to see Elizabeth and Zechariah was some 90 miles. Such a journey on foot would have taken several days. It would be like walking from New York City to Philadelphia.

But Mary made that arduous journey because she wanted to assist Elizabeth during the final months of her pregnancy. Undoubtedly, Mary also wanted to tell Elizabeth the amazing news she had received from the angel Gabriel.

As she walked along, no other person greeted Mary with the words Elizabeth used when she saw her. "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb." For them, Mary was just another nameless traveler walking the dusty roads leading from Nazareth.

In our day that is still the case. So many people view Mary only as someone who traveled through history some 2,000 years ago and they consider the fruit of her womb as just another religious leader, a teacher, a philosopher, or a mythical figure from the past.

But we see things differently. Touched by that same Holy Spirit that came upon Elizabeth and allowed her to see the truth about Mary, we too recognize Mary's special role in the story of salvation. In fact, we address her with the very words of Elizabeth each time we pray the *Hail Mary*. We say, "Blessed are you among woman."

That same Holy Spirit has also given us the faith to proclaim the child of Mary's womb as our Savior and Lord.

As the season of Christmas is about to begin, we might ask ourselves a question similar to the one that Elizabeth asked herself when Mary arrived at her door. "How does this happen to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?"

We might ask, "How does it happen that the child of Mary should come into our lives?"

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***Best Wishes for a Joyous Christmas, Filled with God's Presence and Peace!***