

LOOKING TO SUNDAY®

Sunday, December 27, 2015

Feast of the Holy Family

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.

NOT AS SMART

Young people today seem to be smarter than ever. They seem to instinctively know how to use digital devices without consulting a manual. They use smartphones as extensions of themselves. They relate to one another and to the world through an array of social media. They are able to use search engines to access information in a matter of seconds. They are often the ones writing new software and forming companies that make innovative use of the Internet. As a group they have tremendous purchasing power and influence. And they are often the ones setting styles and trends that are followed by the general population.

Young people just seem to be smarter than older people. But while that may be true in some areas, especially when it comes to the digital world, that does not mean that young people are smarter when it comes to what may be most important, namely, making good decisions.

We see an example of that in the Gospel (Luke 2:41-52) for this Sunday's Feast of the Holy Family.

In that Gospel reading we hear how Jesus accompanies Mary and Joseph to Jerusalem for the celebration of Passover. When the feast ends, Mary and Joseph and their relatives and friends leave the city to return home.

After a day passes, Mary and Joseph realize that Jesus is not among the caravan so they return to Jerusalem to look for him. After three days of searching they find "him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions."

But Jesus was not lost or uncertain of how to find his way back home. Jesus had made a conscious decision to stay behind in his "Father's house" while the rest of his group returned home as planned.

If Jesus had been upset and thought he had been inadvertently left behind, he would have set out to look for Mary and Joseph. He would not have remained in the Temple for three days and continued his discussions with the religious authorities.

Jesus made the decision to stay behind with the wisdom and understanding that he had as a 12 year old boy. He had religious knowledge to be sure but his understanding of his role in the family and his knowledge of the pain he would cause Mary and Joseph by his decision seemed to be lacking. As Mary asked him, "Son, why have you done this to us? Your father and I have been looking for you with great anxiety."

He returned home to Nazareth and there, "Jesus advanced in wisdom and age and favor before God and man." That process of growing in wisdom, age, and favor continued for 18 years, for Luke tells us that "Jesus began his ministry when he was about thirty years of age." (Luke 3:23)

At that point, Jesus was ready to go forth and to make wise decisions that would advance his ministry and promote the coming of God's kingdom.

This Gospel reminds us that making good decisions requires a wisdom that comes with age and experience, and we might add, with the help of the Holy Spirit. That's true for young people and not so young people as well. We all need more growing in wisdom!

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*Best Wishes for a Joyful Christmas Season
and a New Year Filled with God's Blessings!*