

LOOKING TO SUNDAY™

Sunday, January 16, 2011

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.

SEEKING ATTENTION

Most people seek attention in life. They want to be noticed. They want to feel important. They want their moment of fame and notoriety.

That may explain why certain people upload all types of videos of themselves to sites such as *YouTube*, while some publish blogs containing their every thought on every subject, and others make their existence known to the world through *Facebook*, and still others use *Twitter* to let their "followers" know what they are doing throughout the day. And many folks do all the things just mentioned and more as they draw attention to themselves in cyberspace.

The need for attention also accounts for people's desire to appear on reality shows that make some a subject of praise and others an object of derision. Some people will literally do anything, positive or negative, good or bad, if it brings them the attention they seek.

In this Sunday's Gospel (John 1:29-34), we meet a man who was attracting the attention of large numbers of his fellow Jews and of the religious leaders in Jerusalem. People were flocking to hear his message and to be baptized by him in the River Jordan as they acknowledged their sins. John could easily have been caught up in all the positive attention he was receiving but he was not. Instead John did all he could to focus attention away from himself to someone else.

When John saw Jesus he proclaimed "Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world." Jesus was, as John announced, the Lamb of God whose blood would save people as did the blood of the lamb slain that first Passover in Egypt. Jesus was the Lamb of God who would be led to slaughter, an image of the suffering servant described in the prophecies of Isaiah. Jesus was the Lamb of God who would be victorious over sin and death as was the glorious lamb described in the Book of Revelation.

John's purpose was not to be the center of attention but to center attention on Jesus. As John explained "the reason I came baptizing with water was that he might be made known to Israel."

The mission of the Church, the mission of every preacher, the mission of every parish, the mission of every Christian, is the same as that of John the Baptist. We are not to draw attention to ourselves. We are to draw attention to Jesus Christ for he alone is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!

© 2011 Rev. Thomas B. Iwanowski