

LOOKING TO SUNDAY®

Sunday, January 27, 2013

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.

LESS THAN TEN SECONDS

How long was the homily you heard last Sunday? Four minutes? Seven minutes? Ten minutes? Fifteen minutes? In this Sunday's Gospel (Luke 1:1-4, 4:14-21), we hear a homily of Jesus that lasts less than one minute. In fact, it is less than ten seconds in length – only nine words long.

Jesus delivers that homily during a Sabbath service in his hometown of Nazareth. He is handed the scroll of the prophet Isaiah from which he proclaims a passage referring to a time when a person filled with God's Spirit will bring glad tidings to the poor, sight to the blind, and freedom to the oppressed. That person will announce the arrival of God's acceptable time of liberation, freedom and joy. After that reading, Jesus gives his nine word homily. "Today this Scripture passage is fulfilled in your hearing."

Jesus proclaims that he is fulfilling that prophecy. He is announcing good news to the poor and powerless. He is opening the eyes of the blind. He is freeing those caught in the grasp of sin. He is proclaiming that God's compassion and mercy are present in him. We certainly see Jesus doing just that as we read the "orderly sequence" of events that Luke hoped to provide in the Gospel that bears his name.

That nine word homily preached by Jesus 2,000 years ago is one that he preaches again each time Sunday's Gospel is proclaimed. "Today this Scripture passage is fulfilled in your hearing." This is the "today" when the Lord calls us to recognize what He is doing.

Today Jesus Christ is proclaiming glad tidings to the poor through the actions of Christians who assist the needy, the hungry, and the hurting. Each parish soup kitchen, each Church food pantry, each Catholic hospital, each work of Catholic Charities is hope and good news to the poor.

Today Jesus Christ is opening the eyes of those blind to the value and purpose of life and blind to the presence of God through the ministry of catechists, youth ministers, priests, religious, and other committed Christians who share their faith with young and old alike.

Today Jesus Christ is offering freedom to those oppressed by sin, past failings, and unjust situations, as the Church imparts forgiveness in the Sacrament of Reconciliation and as Christians work to change societal structures that keep people trapped in hopeless conditions.

Today Jesus Christ is announcing that this is God's acceptable time as his Church welcomes all people to experience the love and presence of God in the liturgy and in the life of the Church. Each parish says God is here in this time, in this place, with these people. This is the acceptable time when God's love and compassion are available to all who open their heart to God.

It takes less than ten seconds for Jesus to preach his eye opening homily that calls us to recognize what he is doing in our day. "Today this Scripture passage is fulfilled in your hearing."

