

# **LOOKING TO SUNDAY™**

**Sunday, March 7, 2010**

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.

## **PUNISHMENTS?**

Tuesday, January 12, 2010 a catastrophic magnitude 7 earthquake devastated the nation of Haiti. The following day, during a program on his Christian Broadcasting Network, the Reverend Pat Robertson said the earthquake was God's punishment. He said that 200 years ago the people of Haiti made a pact with the devil to win their freedom from France and "ever since, they have been cursed by one thing after another."

Such thinking was even more common during the time of Jesus. Disasters were seen as punishments from God because of sin. In this Sunday's Gospel (Luke 13:1-9) Jesus refuses to accept such thinking as he comments about a group of people executed in Galilee because of Pilate's cruelty and 18 others killed at Siloam by a falling tower. Jesus says those who lost their lives were no more guilty than anyone else. He then goes on to say "I tell you, if you do not repent you will all perish as they did."

Jesus cites those tragedies as reminders that life is precarious, that tomorrow is not a certainty for anyone of us. To emphasize his point, Jesus then tells the parable of the fruitless fig tree that is given one more year to bear fruit. If it does not, it is to be cut down. This is another stark reminder that the time we have to take the Gospel to heart and to live as faithful Christians is limited. Those who are caught unprepared, found without good fruit, to use the image of the parable, will face judgment.

Earthquakes, acts of cruelty, and freak accidents are not caused by a vengeful God. But their happening serves as a reminder of something we forget at our own peril. They remind us that today is the only day that we have for certain to turn from sin and be faithful to the Gospel. Tomorrow is only a possibility.

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