

LOOKING TO SUNDAY®

Easter Sunday, April 8, 2012

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.

OUT OF THE BOX

If you go into a company mail room, you will see row upon row of boxes where mail is put waiting to be picked up. A box is assigned to each person in the firm. If you visit a post office, there is a section filled with hundreds of metal boxes assigned to individuals and businesses.

In today's digital world, messages are placed into virtual "inboxes" waiting to be read. There are even computer programs that will sort email into various "boxes" depending upon the subject line or the presence of key words in the text.

But mail is not the only thing we put into boxes. We also put people into boxes, not into physical or digital boxes, but we put people into mental boxes. We tend to categorize and label people and we rarely let them out of the box where we have put them.

We have a mental box for the people we consider friends, and another for those we think of as enemies or just obnoxious.

We have a mental box for people who are outgoing and popular, and another for the shy and nerdy among us.

We have a mental box for Republicans, another for Democrats, and a third for Independents, and perhaps new boxes for Tea Party people and Occupy Wall Street folks.

Men and women have boxed other people in and categorized them for centuries. Certainly Jesus was boxed in and categorized. To the people of Nazareth, he was just a home town boy. To the Jewish high priests, he was a thorn in their side. To the Roman authorities, he was another Jewish trouble maker. To his relatives, he was too wrapped up in his preaching, and perhaps a little crazy (Mark 3:21). To the Jews of Jerusalem, he was the political messiah who would free them from Rome. To his disciples, he was their rabbi and teacher. To those who conspired against him, he was a threat to be eliminated. Each group had boxed Jesus in.

Those who had put Jesus into their negative boxes had their way with him when they crucified him, put his body into a tomb, and rolled the stone across its entrance. They put Jesus into the ultimate mental and physical box. He was dead and gone, and would soon be forgotten.

But as the Resurrection proclaims, Jesus could not be boxed in, not even by death. As we read in Sunday's Gospel (Mark 16:1-7), when the women came to the tomb that first Easter "they saw the stone had been rolled away...on entering the tomb they saw a young man sitting on the right side. He said to them 'Do not be amazed! He has been raised; he is not here.'"

Jesus could not be boxed in. That is why we can feel his presence when we gather for Mass. That is why we can hear him speak to us in the scriptures. That is why we can stretch out our hands to receive him in Holy Communion. That is why we can speak of having a personal

relationship with him. And that is why we gather to celebrate the Resurrection. Jesus Christ, the Risen One, could not be boxed in, not even by death.

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May the peace and joy of the Risen Lord be with you!