

## **LOOKING TO SUNDAY®**

**Sunday, April 29, 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.

### **COOL OR WARM**

A room is cool when the air conditioning is on, and warm when the heating system is in operation.

A fluorescent fixture gives off a cool light that seems to wash out colors, while an incandescent bulb gives a warm, bright light.

A knock on a stranger's door can bring a cool reception that makes us feel unwelcomed, but it might bring a warm welcome and an invitation to come in.

Describing something as being cool or warm not only applies to things, words can also be cool or warm. For example, the word "parent" is a cool word compared to a warm word like "mom" or "dad". "Offspring" is a cool word when weighed against a warm word like "children" or "son" or "daughter". "Acquaintance" sounds cool in comparison to a word like "friend" or "buddy".

It is interesting that in the Gospels, Jesus usually uses warm words when speaking of God, or of himself, or of the people to whom he is preaching. We see that in this Sunday's Gospel (John 10:11-18). There Jesus speaks of God as "Father," certainly a warm word in comparison to the word "God" that can seem cool, remote, and abstract. Jesus speaks of himself as the "good shepherd." It is a warm phrase, especially in contrast to the "hired man, who is not a shepherd and whose sheep are not his own." Jesus describes the people to whom he is preaching as the "sheep" for whom he is willing to lay down his life. He avoids a cool word like "persons" or "group".

Jesus uses words that are warm, that convey a sense of relationship. A relationship that is so strong that it leads him to describe himself as the good shepherd who will lay down his life for his beloved sheep. Something our Good Shepherd did that first Good Friday afternoon.

Jesus even describes himself as a shepherd whose love is so embracing that it even goes beyond the boundaries that we as Catholics may place on his love. "I have other sheep that do not belong to this fold. These also I must lead, and they will hear my voice, and there will be one flock, one shepherd."

In the Gospels, Jesus goes beyond cool words to speak of God and of those God has made in his image and likeness. God is our Father, we are his children, we are his sons and daughters. Jesus Christ is our Good Shepherd, we are his sheep, we are the flock of the Lord. Warm words to describe the warm place we have in the heart of God!

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***May the peace of the Risen Lord be with you this Easter Season!***