

## **LOOKING TO SUNDAY®**

**Sunday, May 13, 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.

### **SPOKEN TO WHOM?**

"You should never drive above the speed limit if you want to avoid a ticket." Those words spoken by a police officer to an auditorium full of high school students will be heard one way. But the very same sentence spoken by a police officer to a 17 year old whose car has been pulled over will be heard in a whole other way.

"You did a super job on that project!" That compliment given by the CEO to a group of twenty employees who just completed an important assignment will be appreciated. But that very same phrase spoken by the boss to just one person who worked on the project will be heard in whole other way. That complimentary phrase could indicate a raise or promotion might be in that employee's future.

Words and phrases have meaning, but their meaning and importance changes depending on the person or persons to whom those words or phrases are addressed.

In this Sunday's Gospel (John 15:9-17), Jesus says "This is my commandment: love one another as I love you." We can hear those words of Jesus in the same way we hear Jesus' answer to the Jewish scholars who ask about the greatest command in the law. In response Jesus says, "You shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the greatest and the first commandment. The second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself." (Matthew 22: 37-39) Jesus gives a general principal, love God and love your neighbor.

However, when Jesus says "love one another as I love you," Jesus is not speaking to a general audience but to a very specific group of people. He is speaking "to his disciples" gathered at the Last Supper. He is speaking to those he addresses as "friends." He is speaking to those who have personally experienced his love. What they have seen and experienced is to guide their interaction with one another. "Love one another as I love you."

Those words of Jesus are addressed to his disciples today. They are addressed to his Church - his Church spread throughout the world and his Church found in our local parishes. We are to love one another as he loves us. That love was so great it even led Jesus to the Cross. As he says in the Gospel "No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends."

However, in our day it seems that many of the disciples, many of the members of Christ's Church, fall short in loving as he loved. At times Catholics seem to be divided into opposing camps: liberals versus conservatives; proponents of Vatican II versus those who believe the Council's reforms need reforming; social justice Catholics versus pro-life Catholics; the hierarchy versus an ever more critical laity; bishops versus religious sisters; etc.

It is to us, his disciples, that Jesus speaks the words in Sunday's Gospel. Not to the world in general but specifically to us, his Church. "This is my commandment: love one another as I love you."

© 2012 Rev. Thomas B. Iwanowski

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