

LOOKING TO SUNDAY®

Sunday, June 10, 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.

LIFE ON THE LINE

The playing of taps as a military honor guard salutes a flag draped casket holding the remains of a soldier killed in Afghanistan.

A fire truck slowly passing in a funeral procession as it carries the coffin of a firefighter who died trying to save a child trapped in a blazing home.

Ranks of police officers standing shoulder to shoulder as a piper plays "Amazing Grace" while the casket of a fallen officer is solemnly carried from a church.

Such scenes touch our emotions. Such scenes confront us with the deaths of individuals who willingly put their life on the line for others.

In this Sunday's Gospel (Mark 14: 12-16, 22-26), we hear a familiar passage that is the basis for the words of consecration prayed at every Mass. "While they were eating, he (Jesus) took bread, said the blessing, broke it, gave it to them, and said, 'Take it; this is my body.' Then he took a cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them, and they all drank from it. He said to them, 'This is my blood of the covenant, which will be shed for many.'"

That first Holy Thursday night, Jesus shared his life with the disciples as they ate the bread and drank the wine of the Passover meal. The following day, he did what he said. He gave his body as it was nailed to the wood of the cross. He gave his blood as it poured from his wounded flesh. Jesus, our Lord and our brother, sacrificed his life so that humanity might be brought into a new relationship, a new covenant, with God.

Each time Mass is celebrated that sacrifice of Jesus is made present. In the liturgy, Jesus gives his body and blood that we might be freed from the power of darkness, sin, and everlasting death and that we might grow in our relationship with God and with our fellow Christians and become one "holy communion" of love.

Over the years of attending Mass and listening again and again to the words of consecration, we may have become less conscious, less appreciative, of what Jesus did for us. This Sunday's Feast of the Body and Blood of Christ challenges us to look with fresh eyes on the fact that Jesus put his life on the line for us. Something he continues to do as he allows his body and blood to be placed into our hands during the celebration of Mass.

The sacrifices made by those who serve our country, who rescue us from danger, and who protect us from evil, are nothing compared to the sacrifice of the Son of God, who took on flesh, and placed his life on the line for us!