

LOOKING TO SUNDAY™

Sunday, June 20, 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.

THE WHOLE PICTURE

Sometimes we don't see the whole picture. Sometimes we only get things half right. That certainly is the case in this Sunday's Gospel (Luke 9:18-24) There the disciples tell Jesus that the crowds think that he is John the Baptist, or Elijah, or one of the other great prophets returned to life. Jesus then asks, "But who do you say that I am?" Peter replies, "The Christ of God."

Yet rather than commending Peter's answer – for Jesus was the Christ, the Messiah, the Anointed One – Jesus tells the disciples to keep the answer to themselves.

Yes, Jesus was the Christ, but not in the way the disciples understood that title. For them the Christ would be a great military leader who would restore the glory of Israel. Yet Jesus says he "must suffer greatly and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed and on the third day be raised." Rather than being a worldly conqueror, the Christ would appear to be the one conquered in the eyes of the world.

When it came to understanding Jesus as "the Christ of God" the disciples only got things half right.

Sometimes we only get things half right when it comes to understanding ourselves as followers of Christ. We readily accept Christ's message about forgiveness, love, compassion, mercy, and eternal life, but we miss his message about denying ourselves, taking up our cross each day, and losing our lives in service to our neighbor and in faithful obedience to God. That part of the message is often missed.

Perhaps each time we sign ourselves with the cross, as we do so often when we pray, we can remember that Jesus had the cross in his life. We can also remember that as followers of "the Christ of God" some aspect of the cross will be in our life as well. Suffering and sacrifice are part of the whole picture.

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