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.

NOT A GOOD SALESMAN

Good salespeople know how to sell. They know the product they are selling, and even more importantly, they know how to read potential customers. They size them up and decide on a particular approach. For example, when selling a car to a mother with children, the salesperson will emphasize the vehicle’s safety features, its reliability, and its cargo space. When selling one to a twenty year old male, the salesperson will emphasize its styling, power, and performance, and its ability to turn heads, especially female heads.

When good salespeople see a potential customer start to shy away, they will change their approach, sweeten the offer, and perhaps even ask, “What do I need to do to get you to buy this?” Good salespeople know that you never let a customer walk away to think about a purchase. Customers who walk out of a store or showroom rarely come back. Good salespeople are persistent and bold. They do whatever is necessary to close the deal.

Jesus would not have made a very good salesman. At least it seems that way from Sunday’s Gospel (John 6:60-69). Earlier Jesus had been speaking about himself as “the living bread that came down from heaven.” He had said to his disciples, “Unless you eat of the Son of Man and drink his blood you do not have life within you…. For my flesh is true food, and my blood is true drink.”

Those words caused many of his disciples to be shocked. They began to murmur among themselves. “This saying is hard, who can accept it?” Any good salesman, who saw that he was beginning to lose his customers, that they might walk away, would have changed his approach. But Jesus did not try to explain his words, or tell his disciples they were missing the point, or jump to another topic, or try to change their focus by performing some miraculous deed.

Instead, Jesus pushed forward with another shocking statement, “What if you were to see the Son of Man ascending to where he was before?” If thinking of him as bread from heaven was hard, how much harder would it be to accept that he would return to heaven, that he would return to the heart of God?

With those words, Jesus lost many of his disciples. “As a result of this, many of his disciples returned to their former way of life and no longer accompanied him.”

What did Jesus do? He let those disciples walk away. He did not compromise who he was. He did not compromise the truth he was proclaiming. Those who stayed recognized he was the way, the truth, and the life. He was the Christ, the Son of the living God. He was the bread from heaven.

There was no one else like him. There was no message like his. As Peter said, “Master, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life.”
Today Jesus Christ continues to proclaim his message without shading or compromise. A message proclaimed not by salespeople, but by Christians who truly believe that Jesus Christ has the words of eternal life!

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