

# ***LOOKING TO SUNDAY™***

## **Sunday, September 5, 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.

### **RIGHT ON!**

Lost sheep, mustard seeds, buried treasure, and wine skins, all appear in the parables of Jesus. But most of us have little personal experience of those things or of other images used by Jesus in the Gospels.

However, that is not the case in this Sunday's Gospel. (Luke 14:25-33) There Jesus refers to things that are as contemporary as today's headlines.

Jesus speaks of a person who begins building a tower but does not complete the project because "he did not have the resources to finish." In our day we see many unfinished "towers" because their funding has dried up. Just consider the Xanadu Project in the Meadowlands of Bergen County or the Revel Casino in Atlantic City.

Jesus then speaks of a king who before marching off to war carefully considers whether he has the military strength to successfully engage his enemy. "If not...he will send a delegation to ask for peace terms." That parable immediately brings to mind the decision of our nation's leaders to wage wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Jesus addresses those parables to the "great crowds" that were following him. Just as a builder has to calculate the cost of a project and a king the cost of waging war so a would be disciple needs to consider the cost of embracing the message of the Gospel.

Jesus is very blunt in revealing those costs. He says that no one can truly follow him "without hating his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters and even his own life." He says no one can be his disciple "who does not renounce all his possessions."

In dramatic language Jesus tells his disciples that they must put their relationship with him before every other human relationship, even above the relationships that are closest to their heart. Jesus tells his disciples that nothing, no matter how valuable, can have a hold on them. He alone has to be the treasure that they consider of greatest worth.

Jesus does not want disciples who follow him without thinking. Today's unfinished towers and today's unfinished wars challenge us to consider the cost of being a follower of Christ. This Sunday's parables are right on the mark!