

## ***LOOKING TO SUNDAY®***

**Sunday, October 30, 2011**

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.

### **LEADER CRITICISM**

Employees talk about their bosses. Teachers talk about their principals. Parishioners talk about their priests. Citizens talk about their elected officials. Students talk about their teachers. Athletes talk about their coaches. Children talk about their parents.

All of us tend to talk about those who hold positions of power, especially if those people have authority over us. Often such talk tends to be critical.

We criticize our bosses, our principals, our priests, our government officials, our teachers, our coaches, and our parents, and most often that criticism revolves around the fact that those people are not always true to their words. They say fine things, dispense sound advice, and offer good direction. But they do not always take their own words to heart. A boss tells his employees to work hard, but he himself exerts little effort. A teacher urges her students to apply themselves, but she does only the minimum. Government leaders speak about the need to sacrifice for the common good, but frequently they look out only for themselves.

In this Sunday's Gospel (Matthew 23:1-12), Jesus talks about leaders, in particular religious leaders, and he criticizes them for the same reason we often criticize those in authority. They say one thing, but do another. They speak the right game, but play the wrong one.

In Sunday's Gospel, Jesus makes a truly damning criticism of the religious leaders of his day. "The scribes and the Pharisees have taken their seat on the chair of Moses. Therefore, do and observe all things whatsoever they tell you, but do not follow their example. For they preach but they do not practice."

Authenticity is what we look for in our leaders. That is what makes Jesus Christ the one and only perfect leader. His words and actions were in complete harmony. He spoke the truth and he lived the truth. He preached the Gospel and he followed the Gospel. He told us to love our enemies and he loved his, even when they rejected and crucified him. He called us to love God with all our heart, soul, and mind, and that is what he did, he put loving the Father above all else.

It's easy to criticize those in authority for not living according to the words they speak. For unlike Jesus, they are not perfect. In fact they are just like us. For if we are honest with ourselves, we know our good words are not always paired with good actions. We live in a world of imperfect leaders and equally imperfect followers!

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