

## ***LOOKING TO SUNDAY®***

**Sunday, November 17, 2013**

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.

### **SIGNS OF THE END?**

False prophets. Wars. Insurrections. Earthquakes. Famines. Plagues. Nation versus nation. Persecutions. Arrests. Betrayals. Family conflicts.

All those things are mentioned by Jesus in this Sunday's Gospel (Luke 21:5-19) as he speaks of the coming destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem and his return. Yet in the midst of this recital of the frightening things to come, Jesus says, "do not be terrified; for such things must happen first, but it will not immediately be the end."

That statement of Jesus might give us another possible way to understand this Gospel reading. The things that Jesus mentions may not be signs that the end is near, but rather signs of how far we are from the end when the kingdom of God will come in all its fullness.

The kingdom that Jesus preached and which he embodied was a kingdom of love, justice and peace. A kingdom where all creation would be in harmony with itself and its creator. A kingdom where humanity would be at peace with God, the way it was in the beginning when Adam and Eve were comfortable with God as God walked "in the garden at the breezy time of the day." (Genesis 3:8) A kingdom where the Sermon on the Mount would be lived out and all would be "blessed."

The evils that Jesus speaks of in Sunday's Gospel are symptoms of the sin, selfishness, distrust, hatred, greed and darkness that infect our world and hinder the coming of God's kingdom.

We might ask ourselves why would Jesus return when humanity was so far from embracing the kingdom? Wouldn't he rather return when his disciples had fulfilled their mission to "make disciples of all nations" (Matthew 28: 19) and when, like the mustard seed, the kingdom had blossomed in all its fullness (Matthew 13:32)?

Perhaps Sunday's Gospel is not so much a warning about the terrible things that will happen at the end but rather a vivid reminder of how far our troubled world is from being what God wishes it to be. If read that way, Sunday's Gospel is not so much a prediction of bad things, as it is a challenge for us to boldly confront the darkness so that God's kingdom may come!

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