

LOOKING TO SUNDAY®

Sunday, November 18, 2012

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.

HAPPENING & HEARING

How well we hear something depends on several things. It depends upon how audibly and distinctly people are speaking. Obviously a person speaking clearly and loudly is much easier to hear than someone whispering or mumbling.

It depends upon the acoustics in the room and whether or not there are competing sounds. It is much easier to hear something in a concert hall designed to keep out ambient sound than to hear something said in a high school gym during a basketball game.

It depends upon our physical ability to hear and also upon our level of attention. A person with a hearing loss cannot grasp every word or phrase that is spoken. A person listening half-heartedly because he or she is doing something else at the same time cannot hear as well as someone who is focused on the conversation.

But something else determines how well we hear and that is what is happening in our life. If we are thinking about buying a new car we will hear the car ads from Toyota, Ford, or Subaru much better than if we were not in the market for a new automobile. If we are having health issues, we will hear medical reports on the news that previously we would have ignored. The same is true when it comes to the scripture readings at Mass.

We will most likely hear this Sunday's Gospel (Mark 13:24-32) much better now than when it was last read in 2009. Since then, Hurricane Irene and Superstorm Sandy have caused havoc in the Northeast. Moreover it seems as if more natural disasters than ever – tornados, blizzards, droughts, and wildfires - have affected other parts of our nation. So when we hear Jesus speak of a time when "the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will be falling from the sky, and the powers in the heavens will be shaken," we hear them more clearly. We pay more attention. We wonder if that time that Jesus speaks of is drawing closer. Who can say? It might be. However, Jesus does tell us, "But of that day or hour, no one knows, neither the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father."

If we clearly hear the message of the Gospel, Jesus is proclaiming that this is a critical time, whether or not it is end time. For us, this is an important moment, for this is the only moment and time that we have. The future is just a hope. Life is fragile. Things we thought would stand for years are washed away in a moment by wind and waves. We cannot count on the fact that there will be a tomorrow, or a day after tomorrow for us to turn from sin, to do good, to love our neighbor, and to be the Christians we are called to be.

What is happening today might have a small silver lining, it may help us to better hear and appreciate the message of Jesus in this Sunday's Gospel.

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