

LOOKING TO SUNDAY®

Sunday, November 24, 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.

SAVE ME!

When a teenage swimmer struggling in ocean waves cries out "Save me!" the message is unmistakable. "Pull me out of the water! I'm drowning."

When a tenant trapped in a burning apartment screams "Save me!" the meaning is clear. "Get me out of here! Don't let me burn to death!"

When a child being attacked by a vicious dog yells "Save me!" those words need no explanation. They mean, "Get that dog off me! It's biting me."

In every case a person pleads to be saved from something – deep water, raging flames, an angry dog.

The concept of being saved appears in this Sunday's Gospel (Luke 23:35-43) for the Solemnity of Christ the King. There Luke recounts how different people called upon Jesus to demonstrate his saving power as he hung upon the cross.

The Jewish rulers sneeringly said, "He saved others, let him save himself if he is the chosen one, the Christ of God."

The Roman soldiers jeered, "If you are King of the Jews, save yourself."

And one of the criminals being executed alongside him insultingly demanded, "Are you not the Christ? Save yourself and us."

Certainly if Jesus were a worldly king, as the inscription attached to his cross declared, he would have done all in his power to save himself from suffering and death. But Jesus was a different type of king. That was something the other criminal, the "good thief," recognized. He did not demand that Jesus save him from the cross. Rather he asked, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom." He asked Jesus to save a place for him.

Jesus, our Savior, our King, does not save us from all the rejection, suffering, and pain that come with living in this world, nor from death, anymore than he saved himself or the good thief from those evils. Instead Jesus saves us *for* something. He saves us for an everlasting relationship with him.

Those who cry out "Save me!" to Christ the King are saved for a place in his kingdom. Like the good thief they have the assurance "You will be with me in Paradise."

"Lord, save me!" means one thing to those whose vision is restricted to this world, but to those who have faith, those words mean something very different, and far more significant.

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