

LOOKING TO SUNDAY™

Sunday, December 27, 2009

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.

GROWING UP FAST!

From birth to age 12 in 2 days – that's certainly growing up fast! That can be the impression we have when we hear the Gospel for this coming Sunday (Luke 2:41-52). Christmas Day, December 25, the Gospel is focused on the birth of Jesus. This coming Sunday, December 27, just two days later, the Gospel describes an incident that took place in the Temple of Jerusalem when Jesus was 12 years old. To add to that unexpected sequence, the Gospel readings for Friday, January 1, and for Sunday, January 3, present Jesus as an infant once more as he is visited by adoring shepherds and by magi bearing gifts.

It's obvious the choice of readings is not motivated by chronology but rather by theology. The Gospel readings of this Christmas Season are meant to help us come to know the child who was born in Bethlehem.

This Sunday we read that Mary and Joseph did not fully know the child who had been under their roof for the past 12 years. It says they were "astonished," filled "with anxiety," and "they did not understand what he said to them."

This reading can remind us that the Jesus we think we know is more than the baby of Bethlehem, more than a precocious adolescent in the Temple, more than a rabbi or teacher, and more than the titles we attached to him – titles that we would find difficult to fully explain if we were challenged.

The Gospel for Sunday's Feast of the Holy Family tells us that Mary and Joseph struggled to understand their Son. Since that was true for them, we should not be surprised that we sometimes find it a challenge to understand and appreciate the members of our own families. Nor should we be surprised that it takes reading and reflection over many years for us to understand and appreciate Jesus Christ, the one who is our brother and our Lord and our God.

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BEST WISHES FOR A JOYOUS CHRISTMAS SEASON!