

## ***LOOKING TO SUNDAY®***

**Sunday, December 30, 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.

### **A DEEPER MEANING**

What happened? What does it mean? What deeper meaning was the author trying to convey? Questions like those are asked of students after they have completed a reading assignment. Those questions are even more important for us to consider when we read the Gospels assigned for each Sunday. If we do not, we miss their fuller, deeper meaning.

This Sunday's Gospel (Luke 2:41-52) is about Mary, Joseph, and the 12 year old Jesus going to the temple in Jerusalem for the feast of Passover. When Mary and Joseph join the caravan for the trip back home, Jesus remains behind. Mary and Joseph frantically search for their lost son. After three days they find him in the temple "in the midst of the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions."

Is the reading only about a religious pilgrimage, only about a precocious teenager-to-be, only about parents discovering something more about their child, or is it about something deeper?

This reading, which relates the only incident recorded in the Gospel of Luke from the infancy of Jesus to his baptism by John, foreshadows what is to come in the life of Jesus.

In this reading, Jesus goes to Jerusalem for the feast of Passover. The final trip Jesus will make also leads to Jerusalem for Passover. That trip will end in his being "lost" to crucifixion and death.

In this reading, Mary and Joseph search for the missing Jesus for three days. After his death, Jesus will be "missing" for three days in the tomb.

In this reading, Mary and Joseph are astonished when they find Jesus. To say the least, the disciples and Mary will be astonished and amazed when they find the Risen Lord standing before them.

In this reading, we hear the earliest words of Jesus recorded by any of the Gospel writers. Jesus says to Mary and Joseph, "Why were you looking for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?" That response summarizes the future ministry of Jesus. Jesus will devote himself to living "in the Father's house", that is, to living in the Father's presence and doing his will.

In this reading, Mary and Joseph do not understand what Jesus says to them. How often in the Gospels will the disciples fail to understand the words and actions of Jesus. As Jesus says in frustration after the miracle of the loaves and fish, "Do you not yet understand or comprehend? Are your hearts hardened?" (Mark 8:17)

Sunday's Gospel reading and all the Gospels proclaimed during the year have more in them than we might think. Like Mary, we need to keep them in our heart and reflect upon them. By doing so, like Jesus, we too will advance "in wisdom and age and favor before God and man."

If a good story written by a human author has deeper levels of meaning, how much more meaning is contained in the Gospels written under the inspiration of God?

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*Best Wishes a New Year Filled with God's Presence and Peace!*