

32<sup>nd</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time, 6 November 2022

Scriptures: 2 Maccabees 7:1-2, 9-14; 2 Thessalonians 2:16—3:5  
Luke 20:27-38

Homily: Fr. Ken

In the first reading we heard the story from the Old Testament of the mother and her seven sons who suffered martyrdom because of their loyalty to God's law and belief of the resurrection of the dead.

In the New Testament reading from the Second Letter to the Thessalonians, St. Paul urges his friends to find comfort and hope in the love that Jesus has shown them.

In the Gospel, an absurd question from the Sadducees prompts Jesus to speak of the resurrection of the dead.

The Sadducees were an aristocratic political party, composed mainly of the leading priestly families. They tended to be conservative in religious matters: so they considered that only the first five books of the Bible were authoritative; and they denied the resurrection of the dead as a new belief. They decide to confront Jesus on the issue. Their ploy is to ridicule belief in resurrection from the dead. They begin by recounting the absurd story of seven brothers who, each in turn, marry the same woman, and then they pose the question: so whose wife will she be in the afterlife?

Jesus' reply is twofold: first, life in the next world is not simply a continuation of life from this world, but rather the beginning of a new kind of life in which there is no more death and so no need for marriage, no need for propagating the human race. Secondly, Jesus points to a text from the part of the Bible that the Sadducees do revere. It's a passage that describes God as "the

God of Abraham...Isaac and... Jacob", but it would scarcely make sense to speak of God having a relationship with the three patriarchs Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, if in fact they were no longer alive. As Jesus says, "The Lord is God of the living, not the dead".

And so he skillfully turns the insincere trick question of the Sadducees into an opportunity for proclaiming the truth of the resurrection of the dead. Of course, he does not answer all the questions we might like to ask, but already he says enough to bring us, in the words of St. Paul, "inexhaustible comfort and such sure hope".

Now that we are in November, the evenings start to get darker sooner. November is the month of the holy souls, the month we remember—as we do each November—all the parishioners of our parish who died during the year. You can see their names here on the scrolls on either side of the sanctuary. November is also the month when the leaves start falling from the trees.

All of that reminds us that all things do come to an end, including our individual lives on this Earth. But in our celebration of the Eucharist, we find assurance from Jesus himself that we too are destined for eternal life.

The final words of Psalm 27 are these: "I am sure I shall see the Lord's goodness in the land of the living.... Hope in him, hold firm and take heart. Hope in the Lord". Hope, not in the vague sense that a person might say: "I hope it turns out well". But rather hope in the sense of complete confidence that what the Lord Jesus has said is true, utter conviction that he will be faithful to his promise.

If there are times when we feel saddened by the thought that one day we must die, maybe we can say with confidence: "I am sure I shall see the Lord's goodness in the land of the living". After that we will surely be able to "hold firm and take heart".

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