

Thirtieth-second Sunday in Ordinary Time (Year C)

[Reading I: 2 Maccabees 7:1-2, 9-14](#)

[Responsorial Psalm 17:1, 5-6, 8, 15](#)

[Reading II: 2 Thessalonians 2:6-3:5](#)

[Gospel: Luke 20:27-38](#)

Readings may be found on the US Bishop's website:

<https://bible.usccb.org/bible/readings/110622.cfm>



Mottez, La resurrection des mortes 1870

In between the encounter with Zacchaeus last Sunday and the conflict with the Sadducees this week, Jesus arrived in Jerusalem, cleansed the Temple, and began teaching in the Temple. The Sadducees were both priestly and lay aristocrats who wanted to protect the traditions they identified in the written Torah, the first five books of the bible. The cleansing of the Temple was an affront and challenge to them. They arrive now to confront Jesus with an absurd hypothetical condition. The Sadducees did not believe in an afterlife because they did not find it in the Torah.

Drawing upon the command in the Torah that if a man dies and does not have an heir (a male son), the brother of the deceased man was to marry the widow and have a son with her who would take the name of his father and receive the inheritance. Thus, the land or building would remain in the family. The widow was not allowed to marry anyone else, lest the property leaves the family.

The Sadducees present the outlandish condition that a man dies and each of his six brothers dies after marrying the woman. They want to embarrass Jesus by having him identify to whom she will be married when the resurrection occurs. Their concept of resurrection is a return to prolonged human life, of life as humans experience it each day.

Jesus replies that they do not understand the resurrection. In the resurrection, they will not return to an extended human life and there will be no need to marry. They will be no need to have heirs or to raise future generations. People will no longer die for they will live as the children of God. He further challenges their assumption that the concept of resurrection and the afterlife is not found in the Torah by quoting from the Book of Exodus where God identifies himself to Moses as the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob who had died centuries before Moses. Since God must be sustaining these patriarchs in life.

For the contemporary reader, the challenge is to look at the long-term message. What one sees and experiences is not all that exists. Life as God offers it, is much bigger than individual experience. Believers are called to take the long look, to consider life from the eternal perspective that is presented by Jesus. Jesus taught that God's life is within us, that God desires to share the divine Spirit with us, and that new life is available to all who will accept it. The resurrection is an entrance to a completely new experience of life.

The passage from the second book of the Maccabees reinforces this understanding. These books are found in the Catholic and Orthodox bibles but not in the Protestant bibles. First and Second Maccabees comes for the period of 180 until 160 before Christ and recounts the struggle with the imposition of Greek culture and worship on the Jewish people. Antiochus IV became the Greek ruler around 175 before Christ. He took the title "Epiphanes" meaning god manifested. This title was abhorrent to the Jews who were faithful to the covenant and they opposed his orders to worship.

The selection for today relates the story of seven brothers and their mother who are each commanded to break the law of God. One by one they refuse to do so and suffer torture and

death. They each declare that they are serving God who will give them eternal life. Their profession is that God will not abandon them and will give them life. It is not their efforts but God's faithfulness that will bring them to life.

In the Second Letter to the Thessalonians, Paul offers them encouragement and hope. Even though the return of Christ seems delayed, God will be faithful. God loves them and will strengthen them as they strive to follow Christ. He is confident they have responded to the instruction that Paul gave them. He also asks for prayers that his ministry may continue and that God will protect him from the evil plans that others hold.

Reflection Questions:

What other gods are worshipped in our society?

What beliefs are at the foundation of how you live your life?

How does your belief in eternal life impact the way that you live today?

How do you experience encouragement and support in your faith life?

Themes:

Death

Eternal life

Heaven

Virtue of Hope

Prayer Suggestions:

For freedom: that God will help us to place God at the center of our lives and to let go of all the things that interfere with our relationship with God

For all who are fearful of death: that they may discover God's faithful and life-giving presence with them and draw closer to God, who is faithful to us in both life and death

For all who are approaching death: that they may experience the presence of God and loved ones as they commend themselves to God's love and mercy

For all who are grieving the death of a loved one: that they may know God's comforting and healing presence

For greater respect for human life: that God will bring an end to torture, heal those who have been abused, and change the minds and hearts of leaders who use pain to control and punish people