

Scripture Study

Thirty-second Sunday in Ordinary Time – Cycle C



Opening prayer

2 Maccabees 7:1-2,9-14

(Ps 17:1,5-6,8,15)

2 Thessalonians 2:16—3:5

Luke 20:27-38

Overview of the Gospel:

- For the last several weeks we have followed Jesus on his journey to Jerusalem. This Sunday's Gospel reading finds him now in Jerusalem after his triumphal entry (Luke 19:35-40) and his cleansing of the temple (19:45-48). The Jewish authorities, including the Sadducees, begin to look for a way to get rid of him.
- The Sadducees were a religious/political party that accepted only the first five books of the Bible (the Pentateuch) as inspired scripture. Thus they rejected all oral tradition and teachings which they could not find in the Pentateuch, including a belief in the resurrection of the dead (verse 27).
- Their question as posed to Jesus is meant to ridicule the idea of a resurrection. Jesus uses the opportunity (from their own preferred version of the Scriptures) not only to answer their direct question, but to correct their mistaken concept of both marriage and the nature of the world to come.

Questions:

- In the First Reading, what is the basis of the hope of the Maccabean martyrs?
- In light of the themes of the First Reading and the Gospel Reading, what might St. Paul be referring to in the Second Reading when he uses terms like "everlasting encouragement," "hope," the Lord as being "faithful," and "the endurance of Christ"?
- In the Gospel Reading, why would the Sadducees pose a question like this to Jesus? What are they really asking him? How do the scribes respond to Jesus' answer (verse 39-40)? Why?
- How seriously does Jesus treat this absurd question? What if he had ridiculed it?
- How do you deal with someone who wants to argue about religion? What if the person has honest questions and you don't have the answer?
- What does Jesus teach about life after death (verses 34-36)? How does he then "prove" the resurrection (note the verb tense in his quote from Exodus 3:6 and recall *when* this burning bush incident took place)?
- How do you picture the resurrection, or the life to come? What, if anything, in your personal experience has confirmed your belief in life after death?
- Does your belief in the world to come affect your priorities? Should it? How?

Catechism of the Catholic Church: §§ 330, 991-93, 1023-29

Closing Prayer

Remember to read and meditate on the daily Mass readings found in the bulletin!

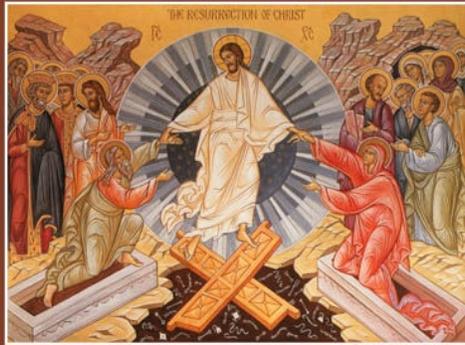
For a person to go straight along the road, he must have some knowledge of the end--just as an archer will not shoot an arrow straight unless he first sees the target ... This is particularly necessary if the road is hard and rough, the going heavy, and the end delightful. --St. Thomas Aquinas

"He is not God of the dead, but of the living; for all live to him"

Scripture: Luke 20:27-38

There came to him some Sadducees, those who say that there is no resurrection, and they asked him a question, saying, "Teacher, Moses wrote for us that if a man's brother dies, having a wife but no children, the man must take the wife and raise up children for his brother. Now there were seven brothers; the first took a wife, and died without children; and the second and the third took her, and likewise all seven left no children and died. Afterward the woman also died. In the resurrection, therefore, whose wife will the woman be? For the seven had her as wife." And Jesus said to them, "The sons of this age marry and are given in marriage; but those who are accounted worthy to attain to that age and to the resurrection from the dead neither marry nor are given in marriage, for they cannot die any more, because they are equal to angels and are sons of God, being sons of the resurrection. But that the dead are raised, even Moses showed, in the passage about the bush, where he calls the Lord the God of Abraham and the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob. Now he is not God of the dead, but of the living; for all live to him."

Meditation: Is your life earthbound or heaven bound? The Sadducees had one big problem – they could not conceive of heaven beyond what they could see with their naked eyes! Aren't we often like them? We don't recognize spiritual realities because we try to



make heaven into an earthly image. The Sadducees came to Jesus with a test question to make the resurrection look ridiculous. The Sadducees, unlike the Pharisees, did not believe in immortality, nor in angels or evil spirits. Their religion was literally grounded in an earthly image of heaven. Jesus retorts by dealing with the fact of the resurrection. The scriptures give proof of it. In Exodus 3:6, when God manifests his presence to Moses in the burning bush, the Lord tells him that he is the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. He shows that the patriarchs who died hundreds of years previously were still alive in God. Jesus defeats their arguments by showing that God is a living God of a living people. God was the friend of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob when they lived. That friendship could not cease with death. As Psalm 73:23-24 states: "I am continually with you; you hold my right hand. You guide me with your counsel, and afterward you will receive me to glory." The ultimate proof of the resurrection is the Lord Jesus and his victory over death when he rose from the tomb. Before Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead, he exclaimed: "I

am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and whoever lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?" (John 11:25). Jesus asks us the same question. Do you believe in the resurrection and in the promise of eternal life with God?

The Holy Spirit reveals to us the eternal truths of God's unending love and the life he desires to share with us for all eternity. Paul the Apostle, quoting from the prophet Isaiah (Isaiah 64:4; 65:17) states: "What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man conceived, what God has prepared for those who love him," God has revealed to us through the Spirit (1 Corinthians 2:9-10). The promise of paradise – heavenly bliss and unending life with an all-loving God – is beyond human reckoning. We have only begun to taste the first-fruits! Do you live now in the joy and hope of the life of the age to come?

"May the Lord Jesus put his hands on our eyes also, for then we too shall begin to look not at what is seen but at what is not seen. May he open the eyes that are concerned not with the present but with what is yet to come, may he unseal the heart's vision, that we may gaze on God in the Spirit, through the same Lord, Jesus Christ, whose glory and power will endure throughout the unending succession of ages." (Prayer of Origen, 185-254 AD)

Meditation: © 2010 Don Schwager
www.rc.net/wcc/readings/