

10th November 2019 (32nd Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year C)

2 Maccabees 7:1-2,9-14; Psalm 16(17):1,5-6,8,15; 2 Thessalonians 2:16-3:5; Luke 20:27-38.

'In God, we all live!'

November is the last month of the Church's liturgical year, the month that invites us to reflect on our relationship with God, especially in the fullness of time.

The first reading and the gospel today, speak about the resurrection from the dead. Belief in life after death developed over time in the life of the people of Israel. As we look through the books of the Old Testament, we note that the earlier writers did not believe in the resurrection. In the book of Genesis, Abraham is promised numerous descendants. Since he does not himself live forever, his name will live on in his descendants. This belief is also reflected in the gospel conundrum presented by the Sadducees; each of the six brothers had to marry the widow in order to raise descendants for the eldest brother who married her first.

In the latter part of the Old Testament, as can be seen in the story narrated in our first reading, some parts of the people of Israel had developed belief in the resurrection. The mother and her seven sons are willing to die a physical death rather than offend God. They believe that God will raise them up again to a heavenly reward. Yet, in the New Testament, the Sadducees still refuted this belief, and tried to ridicule this teaching by their question to Jesus.

The answer to the Sadducees' riddle is very simple: belief in God, necessarily implies belief in the resurrection. If we believe that God is real, living and eternal, then we, created in his image and likeness and carrying within us the breath and life of God, will live forever. What we commonly refer to as the 'soul,' the life of God within us, is immortal and eternal, because it is a part of God.

Here on earth we have a requirement to be husband and wife to each other. One of the properties of marriage is to provide an environment within which children are born and looked after. If men and women were to stop procreating, then humanity itself would die. Jesus points out that this argument does not hold for the next life, in God, because there no one dies any more, but all are fully alive in God.

Moreover, since we are children of God, we carry within our genetic makeup of our heavenly Father. One of these characteristics is eternal life. In God we are all alive, our relatives and friends who have gone before us, enjoy fullness of life in God.

The life of God expresses itself within us here on earth, in a special way, in the love that we share, because God is Love. Every time I love I make God present for myself and for those around me. If I keep this life of God alive in me, then I can be sure that, although I die in the body, I will live in eternity in the fullness of love that is God. Life and love here on earth are only an image, a reflection, of the true life in God himself. We are created with this yearning for God and do our best to keep walking towards this eternal God.

Mario