November 6, 2022—32nd Sunday in Ordinary Time

The Sadducees were a party in the Jewish leadership that didn’t believe in heaven or the resurrection of the dead. Of all things, they oversaw the Temple and its worship, at the time of Jesus. They made up an absurd case to trap Jesus concerning a woman who married 7 brothers one after the other as each one died; then they asked whose wife would she be in the resurrected life, which they didn’t believe in. Jesus replied, “The children of this age marry and remarry; but those who are deemed worthy to attain to the coming age and to the resurrection of the dead neither marry nor are given in marriage.”

Jesus wasn’t denying that the special bond of love that a husband and wife share through marriage would no longer exist in heaven. Remember, marriage has two purposes: love and life. He was saying that there will be no need for the second aspect of marriage, which is the begetting of children. All human loves, especially the marriage bond, will reach their fulfillment and perfection in the glory of heaven.

As we come to the end of the Church year, the Scripture readings direct our thoughts to the Last Things and God’s promises to the faithful. If we keep the goal of our life on earth in mind, it motivates us to choose to live in the way that will attain it. The CCC teaches: “Heaven is the ultimate end and fulfillment of the deepest human longings, the state of supreme, definitive happiness. To live in heaven is ‘to be with Christ.’ The elect live ‘in Christ’, but they retain or rather find, their true identity” (#1024-1025). There we will see the Most Holy Trinity, face to face, along with the Blessed Virgin, the angels and saints, including our own loved ones. It will be a happiness without end, without sickness or distress. It will be a happiness without sin or desire for anything other than what is good. That is our great goal.

Martyrs and saints from all ages have given everything to God in order to reach this goal; the crosses of suffering and trial would not deter them. In the Old Testament Book of Maccabees, the First Reading, we have examples of this kind of faith and courage. This mother and her 7 sons endured torture and death rather than abandon their Jewish faith. They did it, counting on the hope of resurrection and eternal life. The one brother said to his torturers: “It is my choice to die at the hands of men with the hope God gives of being raised up by Him; for you, there will be no resurrection to life.”

Death, which can be so fearful, has taken on a new character in the light of Christ. He endured it, to show us that it is not the end, but the beginning of new life. “I am the resurrection and the life” He told Martha at the entrance to the tomb of her brother Lazarus, just before He raised Lazarus from the dead.

In this life, we have the constant temptation to let fear and hopelessness rule our lives, we have the temptation to abandon the 10 Commandments and the law of love that Jesus has taught us and seek the pleasures of the moment and the esteem of men, rather than God. The culture is teaching us in every way to call evil, good and good, evil. Even among the leaders of the Catholic Church, there are some, who speak with the voice of a false shepherd. None of those will be our judge at the end of our life.

Jesus is the One who will judge us at the moment of death in what is called the particular judgment. There will be a General or Last Judgment at the end of time when He come in glory, which will reaffirm the particular judgment of our lives. It is true to say that His judgment will already be determined by the way we have lived our lives. He will bring light to our conscience, clearing away all deception and rationalization. As He said, “For nothing is covered that will not be revealed or hidden that will not be known” (Matthew 10:26). Let’s remember that Jesus is the perfect judge, He knows all the circumstances that surround our moral choices and He knows of our repentance, which washes away sin. He is the most merciful judge. I, for one, am going to throw myself on the mercy of the court on judgment day.

When we are judged there are 3 possible outcomes. Either we go straight to heaven, which is our goal, straight to hell, which is not, or for further purification in Purgatory before we are ready for heaven. The Book of Revelation (Rev. 21:27) makes it clear that nothing unclean will enter the heavenly Jerusalem. We must make atonement for venial sins that was not done in life, and we have to be freed of all attachment to sin or disordered loves in this world. Then through the fire of God’s love, the help of the Church on earth and in heaven, we will be ready to enter eternal life.

I know I have mentioned this before, but 10+ years ago when the Church was being built I decided to come up each week and bless with holy water the work that had been done, while repeating the St. Michael prayer, the Our Father, Hail Mary and Glory Be. I sprinkled blessed salt many times around the buildings. Also, I took blessed medals and put them in the foundation before the walls went up and

later in the walls before they were sealed with drywall. I had medals of the Sacred Heart, the Miraculous medal, the Holy Spirit, St. Joseph, the Holy Family and other saints, like St. Therese and St. Josemaria Escriva. Later, I did the same for the rectory and the Fatima Shrine. I was very conscious that the beginning of our parish in this spot should begin with prayer. I wanted this Church building and future parishioners to be holy and devoted to God down to our very foundation.