

Living with God Forever

Dear sisters and brothers in Christ,

There is a fascination in our culture with what happens when we die. Movies and books capture the attention of millions of Americans looking for some sense of hope and meaning for their lives. For us, as 21st century Christians, belief in life after death is something that seems to be an obvious and vital part of our faith, a belief that our life on earth is a journey toward God in heaven, where we will experience the fullness of joy in his presence.

In today's Gospel, St. Luke sets the scene by describing a group of Sadducees trying to trick Jesus into getting involved in their own philosophical debate about resurrection and the existence of angels. They ask Jesus a question, trying to show that resurrected life is impossible, even at odds with their own religious tradition and the Law of Moses. Ultimately, their question is about men — seven brothers — possessing a woman in the afterlife. Although this scenario seems ridiculous to us today, it is based on marriage laws found in the Book of Deuteronomy (25:5-6) in which Moses says that a widow's brother-in-law must marry her to ensure that lands stay in the first husband's family and that his name is carried on.

In response, Jesus unravels their question and misperceptions by declaring that there would be no need for marital arrangements in the afterlife. In the resurrection, each person lives as God's child, filled with joy, and free from the fear and prospect of death." Jesus shows the Sadducees that Moses himself can be read as affirming that life continues beyond the grave. As well, we can hear in Jesus' response God's desire for an end to any abuse of women. As beloved daughters of God, they are no longer passed from man to man."

As we come closer to the end of the church year, our attention is being drawn to the second coming of Christ and the themes of the "Last Things." This Sunday's Gospel is an invitation for us to reflect on the promise of a resurrected life offered us by Jesus: Our perfect union with God and the fullness of life forever.

My dear friends, eternal life isn't a mystery to be puzzled out or something that can be captured in books or in films. Rather, it is a promise and a gift that is based on our hope and confidence that God is at work in us even now and that we can experience this resurrection life today as we celebrate the joy, mercy, and peace that comes through our faithful relationship with God in the Eucharist. We can be confident that what we experience here in grace will reach its fulfillment in the life to come.

May God's grace guide us as we journey toward Him.

*--Fr. Anthony Ahamefula
Parish Priest*