

This Week's Gospel
November 10, 2019
Thirty-Second Sunday in Ordinary Time
2 Maccabees 7:1-2, 9-14 † 2 Thessalonians 2:16–3:5 † Luke 20:27-38



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In today's gospel and throughout the New Testament, a group within the Jewish priesthood called Sadducees is consistently distinguished as "those who deny that there is a resurrection" (Mtt 22:23; Mark 12:18-27; Acts 23:6-8). Luke depicts some Sadducees as engaging Jesus in what pretends to be a little harmless eschatological speculation about how inconvenient a resurrection could be. Their intention is not so innocent, however. In fact, they hope to expose this popular preacher to ridicule when he struggles to solve the practical problem they pose: "When a law-abiding woman has married seven men in succession, which of the seven gets to claim her as wife for all eternity?" But the ruse exposes their shallow selves. Language choice in their question betrays prime value: for the materialist, a wife is property. Jesus solves the problem by eliminating marriage altogether. His description of a totally spiritual heaven was probably disappointing to the Sadducees, and perhaps less than satisfactory to many of us. But the gospel invites us to contemplate an unimaginable afterlife with the promise of an intimacy with God transcending all other relationships.

How different and how lovely it would be if the joy of living Christians consistently identified us as "those who believe in the resurrection."