

## ***LOOKING TO SUNDAY®***

**Sunday, November 10, 2013**

This email, entitled Looking to Sunday®, focuses on the Gospel Reading for the coming Sunday. It prepares readers to hear God's Word at Mass and it offers a point of reflection to consider in the days leading to Sunday. Looking to Sunday is written by Father Tom Iwanowski.

### **A FOOLISH HYPOTHETICAL**

The Sadducees would have made good debaters. They knew that a sure way to make an opponent look foolish was to create a hypothetical situation and carry it to the extreme. That is what they do in this Sunday's Gospel (Luke 20:27-38) as they attack Jesus for his belief in the resurrection and eternal life.

The Sadducees did not believe in the concept of resurrection since it was not found in the Torah, the Hebrew Scriptures attributed to Moses. In confronting Jesus they create a hypothetical situation in which a woman is married to seven brothers in succession. One marriage follows another in the hope of bringing forth a male child to carry on the first brother's name and to secure the family property. The Sadducees then ask Jesus, "Now at the resurrection whose wife will that woman be?"

The Sadducees take life as they know it and simply extend it beyond death. Doing so creates an absurd situation that leads them to dismiss the idea of resurrection and eternal life. It would be as if some modern day Sadducee asked Jesus if someone dies as an infant or at age 40 or 95, how old would that person be in the resurrection? If someone dies eaten away by cancer or with amputated limbs, what kind of body would that person have in the resurrection? If someone's earthly pleasure comes from playing golf or watching football, would that person's eternal life consist of ever continuing rounds of golf or of endless NFL games on an immense flat screen TV with no remote?

When resurrection is simply seen as the start of an endless succession of days like those we know, resurrection and eternal life can appear foolish, as they appeared to the Sadducees of the Gospel.

In response Jesus teaches that eternal life is unlike what we experience here. He tells the Sadducees, "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."

God gives us the gift of life. God does not take back that gift when we die. Rather God enriches that gift and wonderfully changes it for the better. As Jesus says of those who experience the resurrection, "for they are like angels; and they are the children of God."

In this Sunday's Gospel, Jesus challenges the Sadducees to broaden their perspective, to expand their horizons, and to look beyond their confining categories. Eternal life is not endless days like those we know, but rather being with the God who loved us into existence and who continues to love us. As Jesus tells us, our God "is not God of the dead, but of the living, for to him all are alive."

