

Fr. Romeo Evangelista's Homily  
November 10, 2019  
32nd Sunday in Ordinary Time (C)

A pastor dies and goes to heaven. When he gets to heaven, he runs into St. Peter. He also sees a bunch of clocks on the wall. "What are all those clocks for?" the man asked. "Well", said St. Peter, "Those clocks move every time someone lies. See that clock over there, that one belongs to Mother Teresa. It has never moved". "Well what about that one?" asked the man. "That one, belongs to Abraham Lincoln. It only moved twice", said St. Peter. The pastor got so excited to see his clock, so he asked St. Peter, "Can you show me my clock"? St. Peter replied, "Oh your clock isn't here, it is in Jesus' office". My clock must be special, the man said to himself. Then he asked St. Peter why? He said, "Jesus likes to use it as a ceiling fan"!

In our Gospel today the Sadducees questioned Jesus about the Resurrection. The Sadducees are a party or group within Judaism in the New Testament period. The party is composed of the priestly aristocracy and their dependents and supporters. The Sadducees accept only the written Torah and totally reject the oral or traditions held by the Pharisees. Since they claim that there is no reference to the resurrection in the written Torah, they do not believe in it. Neither do they accept the existence of angels and spirits which they take as innovations imported from Zoroastrianism.

In their debate with Jesus, the Sadducees present a hypothetical question about a woman with seven successive husbands. This is rooted in the Levirate Law of Moses that requires a man to marry his brother's childless widow. The firstborn son she bears shall continue the line of the deceased brother. This law seeks to guarantee family continuity, centered on this worldly existence. How will a woman in this case live with seven husbands simultaneously—if indeed there is resurrection and the age to come? The Sadducees imply that this will put the Law of Moses to ridicule.

Jesus' riposte explains that the life to come is not exactly a continuation of life in this world. Here, human beings marry and reproduce to ensure the continuity of the human race.

But those found worthy of the resurrection are immortal, like angels. They are “children of God” which is a favorite Old Testament name for angels. Thus, Jesus—contrary to the beliefs of the Sadducees—proclaims the reality of the Resurrection and of angels. Finally, he disproves the non-existence of the dead by his interpretation of the written Law. The fact that Moses called “Lord” the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob means that somehow God sustains the patriarchy in the “age to come”. They are alive in God, since only the living can have a God, and God calls himself the God of the patriarchs.

We know that these people cannot outsmart our Lord Jesus. But we also know that this type of question does not only need a logical answer. To fully understand the reality of the Resurrection is to have faith in the words of our Lord. For without faith no matter how logical we are in our answers, it will never convinced them to believe.

Let us just wait and see until we meet again in the next life. For God is not God of the dead, but of the living, for to Him all are alive.