

Fr. Romeo Evangelista Homily
Sunday, November 6, 2022
32nd Sunday in Ordinary Time
Cycle C

At the funeral of Leonid Brezhnev, the former leader of the communist Soviet Union, people observed the silent protest carried out by Brezhnev's widow. She stood motionless by the coffin until seconds before it was closed. Then, just as the soldiers touched the lid to closed the coffin, Brezhnev's wife performed an act of great courage and hope, a gesture that must surely rank as one of the most profound acts of civil disobedience ever committed: She reached down and made the sign of the cross on her husband's chest.

There in the citadel of secular, atheistic power, the wife of the man who had run it showed her belief and hope in the resurrection – doing so for the whole world to see. And implicitly, she was saying that her husband was wrong not to believe in the Person symbolized by the cross.

A reporter who covered the event said this of the widow: "She hoped that there was another life, and that life was best represented by Jesus who died on the cross. She also hoped that Jesus might yet have mercy on her husband and let him share in the glory of his resurrection."

In Jesus's time, the people believe that the next life will not be any different from life as they know it. It will only be a continuation of earthly life. The Sadducees, on the other hand, do not even believe in the resurrection. In answering the ridiculous question of the Sadducees, Jesus makes it clear that the resurrection is not simply a continuation of earthly life. Rather, the resurrection or resurrected life is a different mode of existence altogether. Jesus refers to the passage where God reveals himself to Moses at the burning bush as the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob.

Our God “is not God of the dead, but of the living, for him all are alive.” We profess our belief in the resurrection every Sunday. We do so in reciting the Creed – by saying: “I look forward to the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen.” What does resurrection mean to us personally? What is its significance and relevance to our life? Is our faith in the resurrection confined in the life after death?

What is the meaning and relevance of our faith in the resurrection in the present, here and now? We have to choose to let our faith in the resurrection affect and influence the way we live our lives. We have to let others know that resurrection is true. We have to let them know this by allowing the resurrection to change us and to work in our lives...and by allowing ourselves to be filled with new life – a new way of seeing things, a new way of relating with others, and a new way of performing our tasks, our mission in life.

We do not believe in a future life but rather in an everlasting life. Our share in Christ’s Resurrection will not happen only in the hereafter. We can and we must share in his Resurrection and in her Assumption here and now by choosing to follow Jesus and imitate Mary. We rise and are somehow assumed when we level up our Christian discipleship – that is, by responding to the call to constant conversion and allowing ourselves be embraced by God’s mercy

- by learning to let go and let God be God in our life
- by being able to say and pray: “Lord, not my will, but your will be done”
- by giving without counting the cost and laboring without asking for reward
- by releasing our resentment and bitterness and deciding to forgive our enemies from the heart

The power of the resurrection that has been effective in Jesus is also working in each one of us. This power is given to us in Baptism. However, we have to allow this power of the resurrection to work in us. We have to let it empower us to love again after having our love rejected. We have to let it empower us to trust again after having our trust betrayed. We have to let it empower us to hope again after having our hope shattered. Indeed, we have to allow the power of the resurrection to work in us and through us. With the Risen Lord, we can experience the resurrection in our lives!