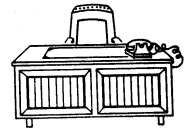


32nd Sunday in Ordinary Time

November 10, 2019



From the Desk of
Fr. Romanus

Dear Parishioners,

Sunday Reflection:

This Sunday's gospel presents an encounter between Jesus and the Sadducees. You might be asking – Who were the Sadducees? Well, the Sadducees were members of a Jewish sect who were part of a religious and political movement in Palestine from the second century B.C. to the first century A.D.

Their name derived from the Hebrew word *tsaddiqim* or *saddikim*, meaning "righteous ones." Some scholars suggest they were named after Zadok, a high priest under King David (I Kings 1:26) who anointed King Solomon. On the contrary, Rabbinic tradition suggests that they may have been named after another Zadok, probably a priest, who rebelled against the teachings of Antigonus of Soko, a government official of Judea in the 3rd century B.C.

According to the historian, Flavius Josephus, Sadducees denied the immortality of the soul, attributed all human activity to free will, and rejected other traditions beyond the Pentateuch. In the New Testament, the Sadducees were active in the Jerusalem Temple (Acts 4:1; 5:17; 23:6), and were said to reject belief in angels and spirits (Acts 23:8) and in the resurrection (Acts 23:8; Mark 12:18).

Sadducees espoused the Hellenizing tendencies of the Asmonean princes. They were unpopular with the common people because of a tendency to align with the ruling power. Sadducees and Pharisees were antithesis of each other. Disputes between them often revolved around issues of purity and impurity. Due to their association with the Temple, Sadducees took issues related to impurity seriously. Emphasis on the differences between purity and impurity was common characteristic of most priestly sects.

Sadducees rejected oral tradition and adhered to the letter of the Mosaic Law, as opposed to the Pharisees who emphasized the superadded tradition of the elders. Unlike the Sadducees, the Pharisees believed in the afterlife whereby God punishes the wicked and rewards good people. Sadducees ceased to exist sometimes after the destruction of the second Temple of Jerusalem (Herod's Temple) around 70 A.D.

In this Sunday's gospel, the Sadducees confronted Jesus with an argument they thought would undermine his teaching on the resurrection. They presented a case of a woman who was married to seven brothers, one at a time. In their reasoning, because all seven brothers in the gospel were married to the woman during their lifetime, it would be impossible to picture them married to her in the afterlife. They assumed that the afterlife would be a continuation of earthly existence.

In response, Jesus states that the resurrection will give rise to a new way of life different from earthly existence. It will be a life where marriage will be unnecessary because the resurrected ones will be like angels. Jesus referred them to Moses' encounter with the burning bush where God revealed himself as God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Hence, God is not God of the dead but of the living, for in him all are alive.

Every now and then, we come across people who use all sorts of arguments to discourage our faith in God or what we believe as Church. Those situations call for counter arguments to support the faith. Hence, the need to learn all you can about your faith. Through faith formation programs, children and youth learn about their faith. This knowledge equips them to stand their ground as they head off to college where they will likely encounter professors or fellow students who use smart arguments to dissuade them. Those who are not on solid foundation easily fall away.

Have a great week!

Fr. Romanus