

## Homily of Thirty-Second Sunday in Ordinary Time Year C, 2022

2 Maccabees 7:1-2, 9-14; Psalm 17:1, 5-6, 8, 15; 2 Thessalonians 2:16-3:5; Luke 20:27-38

The first and second books of Maccabees record the resistance of the Jews against the pagan and tyrant King Antiochus of Syria IV (175-163 B.C.). King Antiochus who ruled Palestine at that time cruelly persecuted the Jews in his effort to abolish Jewish religion and establish Greek culture and religion. "The king sent letters by messenger to Jerusalem and to the cities of Judah, ordering them to follow customs foreign to their land; to prohibit burnt offerings, sacrifices, and libations in the sanctuary, to profane the sabbaths and feast days, to desecrate the sanctuary and the sacred ministers, to build pagan altars and temples and shrines, to sacrifice swine and unclean animals, to leave their sons uncircumcised, and to defile themselves with every kind of impurity and abomination; so that they might forget the law and change all its ordinances. Whoever refused to act according to the command of the king was to be put to death" (1 Maccabees 1:44-50). The first reading is an example of the persecution. Pork was a forbidden food by the Law of Moses. To eat pork, then, was a sign of the abandonment of the Jewish faith.

The world history is full of innumerable Christian persecutions and martyrdoms; which made Tertullian to say, "The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church." Currently, there are all kinds of persecutions of Christians in many parts of the world. There are places Christians are killed. There are places Christians are forced to abandon their properties; or forced to flee from their homeland. There are places Christians are denied their rights and privileges. There are places anti-Christian policies are enforced to discourage the practice of Christianity.

The Books of Maccabees are a record of the resistance of the Jews. I wonder, what is the place of the present generation of Christians and their leaders in the future World History? Will it be a history of resistance? Of resilience? Of triumph? Of growth? Or will it be a history of submission? Of frivolousness? Of everything goes? Of decadence?

The Jewish family in the first reading chose to die rather than abandon their faith. How about myself and my family? Can we be remembered as an exemplary Christian person or Christian family? The steadfastness of the Jewish family should encourage every Christian. Many of us will not be put to death because we are Christians, but we will, constantly, be invited to stand by the truth, and to witness Christ. But then, a dead faith cannot witness Christ. It submits and is blown and tossed by every wind and every current.

In today's gospel, Jesus challenges us that God "is not God of the dead, but of the living, for to him, all are alive" (Luke 20:38). And St. Paul challenges us, "Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ will give you light" (Ephesians 5:14). St. Paul prays for us in the second reading: "May our Lord Jesus Christ himself and God our Father, who has loved us and given us everlasting encouragement and good hope through his grace, encourage [our] hearts and strengthen [us] in every good deed and word..."

The Sadducees exaggerated their question about the seven brothers who died childless having married the same wife. Even if that was the case, God would judge each of the seven brothers according to how each lived with the woman.

The Sadducees denied that there is resurrection, judgement, and afterlife. With this denial, they wrongly believed that they were not going to face the Last Judgement. There are people who commit despicable evils, disregarding that there is always be the day of reckoning, either during earthly life, or during the Last Judgement. Scripture calls such people fools (Psalm 14:1). St. Paul makes it clear, "For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of God; for it is written ... each of us shall give an account of himself to God" (Romans 14:10-12).

As we hear God's word, may we not harden our hearts. Amen (Psalm 94:8).

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