

# THE EMMAUS SERIES

## *32<sup>nd</sup> Sunday Year C*

2 Maccabees 7:1-2, 9-14

2 Thessalonians 2:16 – 3:5

Luke 20:27-38

## He is God, not of the dead, but of the living

Jesus has completed his journey. Having arrived in Jerusalem, he teaches boldly in the Temple, aware that his enemies, 'the chief priests and the scribes, with leading citizens' want to 'do away with him' (Lk 19:47). At this point, Luke includes several incidents of ugly confrontation. That chosen for today's gospel reading – concerned with resurrection – has intimations of the tragic drama that lies ahead. Jesus is confronted by 'some Sadducees', members of a conservative priestly establishment, who saw popular movements as a threat to their interests. Seeing Jesus as a dangerous trouble maker, they set out to discredit him in the eyes of the people by making a fool of him. The Sadducees rejected the belief in a future resurrection that had emerged in the final period of Old Testament times – as unfaithful to the original traditions of God's people. The Old Testament was a time of preparation, a time in which the awareness that made it possible to recognise God's decisive intervention in creation - in the life, death and resurrection of our Saviour – developed gradually. The faith of the Old Testament engendered immense hopes; and with the passing of time these hopes cast a new light on the full implications of the astounding intimacy to which the God of the covenant called his people, and the generosity of God's great promises – so evident in the Psalms, the popular prayer songs that gave expression to Israel's faith. The Sadducees, like many religious conservatives, were too shut in by their comfortable ways to be open to the blessings of an expanded faith – for their outlook, so identified with worldly benefits, a future life could only be a resumption of the affairs of this present life. If our faith and hope have not matured, we too can have very distorted and inadequate notions of what our eternal life with God will be. For this reason, the teaching of Jesus for the Sadducees, is worth pondering.

Jesus points out that there is a unity in God's designs from the beginning. From the first, God has been the Lord of life, not of death. The unending life we will have, in God – the source and origin of all that we admire and hold dear – will certainly be a new existence, beyond all adequate imagining in this life. But this unimaginable fullness will also be the realisation of all the realistic hopes and longings we have ever known. Life in God will be, not the negation, but the affirmation of all that makes us human – a full human existence, in a new heaven and a new earth. In the Risen Lord, and his teaching concerning the life-giving 'reign' of God, we catch a precious glimpse what lies ahead of us.

Devoted spouses will be prompted to ask how what Jesus says affects their marriage union. Properly understood, what Jesus affirms is that they will have all the joy of their most special intimacy, and infinitely more – the immediacy to the reality and life of God that will shape our very existence will bring an intuitive presence in love to all who share in God's life, a presence that includes and goes far beyond the benefits of the union with their beloved they have known in their married life.

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