

Reflection Questions

- What tools and techniques do you resort to when approached by someone interested in a religious argument or quarrel?

- How have you seen God throughout the day today?
 - Perhaps make it a daily routine for the next week to write down 2-3 ways you've seen God throughout each day.

- What miracles are you aware of that God has been directly responsible for?

Monthly Catholic in Recovery Newsletter

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and join our online community*

- Monthly testimony from CIR participants
- New meeting announcements
- Resources and articles overlapping the 12 steps and the sacraments
- Be a part of our global mission

Sunday Mass Readings This Week

1st Reading: 2 Maccabees 7:1-2, 9-14

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 17:1, 5-6, 8, 15

2nd Reading: 2 Thessalonians 2:16-3:5

Gospel: Luke 20:27-38

32nd Sunday in Ordinary Time



Religious quarreling and technical disputes make little sense to the individual or family desperate to find freedom from the addictions, attachments, and compulsions which keep them in darkness. In the Gospels, Jesus often wrestles with the Pharisees. It is important to note that Jesus was socially and religiously close to them, which brought a great deal of pain when conflict got in the way of their mission.

The Pharisees were middle-class, devout Jews who tried very hard—perhaps too hard, in Jesus' estimation—to work a spiritual program. Jesus shared a message with them similar to that of recovery—that the work we are to do must be done alongside God's grace. This week, a different group goes head-to-head with Jesus. The Sadducees were upper-class members of the priestly clans. Jesus only encounters them when He has finally reached Jerusalem, the center of their power. They were disinterested in spending time with the meek and mourning.

The Sadducees did not believe in individual resurrection from the dead since they were already rich with the things of this world. Being *reasonably happy in this life and supremely happy with Him in the next* had no appeal to the aristocrats who believed they had it all. Acting as gods in their own lives, they could not imagine things getting any better than what they already had. Therefore, they fought to protect the status quo while caring little for those who were without.

Jesus was teaching people in the temple area and proclaiming the good news when a group of Sadducees approached him to catch him in a bind. They asked a question about the laws of marriage being upheld after the resurrection. Jesus responds to their naive understanding by making the point that the resurrection is not about people being a certain way or possessing a certain something.

Instead, Jesus claims that we are "children of the resurrection" because we are in a relationship with a Higher Power, the essence of whom is life. We can *turn our will and lives over* (Step 3) to such a Vital Power with confidence that God is faithful. Our Second Reading this week affirms this:

*But the Lord is faithful;
He will strengthen you and guard you from the evil one.
We are confident of you in the Lord that what we instruct you,
you are doing and will continue to do.
May the Lord direct your hearts to the love of God
and to the endurance of Christ.*

The position of the Sadducees and the reductive assumptions they make about Jesus are not much different than the cultural attitudes of today. Fortunately, we get the gift of witnessing God do miraculous things in our lives and the lives of others in our fellowship. We have extended our arms for help, and the hand of our loving God shows us the way.

Our reliance on each other and the connection we share as children of God is an essential element of recovery and our faith as Catholics. High-minded discussions and debates about faith serve a purpose, but if they interfere with anyone's path toward God, they could be reconsidered. Those who have been free from their addiction, attachment, or compulsion of choice for years or decades continue to return to recovery fellowships because it is one of the surest ways to find God and remain free, one day at a time.

As a result of working through the 12 Steps and being part of a Christian community, we may get back what we've lost in our disease and then some. However, the greatest thing we can gain in the process is a personal relationship with Christ and an unrelenting reliance upon Him, as if we are always desperate for His grace.