Wednesday of the Ninth Week in Ordinary Time

Gospel text (*Mk* 12:18-27): Some Sadducees, who say there is no resurrection, came to Jesus and put this question to him, saying, "Teacher, Moses wrote for us, If someone's brother dies, leaving a wife but no child, his brother must take the wife and raise up descendants for his brother. Now there were seven brothers. The first married a woman and died, leaving no descendants. So the second brother married her and died, leaving no descendants, and the third likewise. And the seven left no descendants. Last of all the woman also died. At the resurrection when they arise whose wife will she be? For all seven had been married to her."

Jesus said to them, "Are you not misled because you do not know the Scriptures or the power of God? When they rise from the dead, they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but they are like the angels in heaven. As for the dead being raised, have you not read in the Book of Moses, in the passage about the bush, how God told him, I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? He is not God of the dead but of the living. You are greatly misled."

"He is not God of the dead but of the living"

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Today, the Holy Church invites us to reflect—through the word of Christ—on the reality of the resurrection and the nature of the resurrected bodies. Indeed, the Gospel recounts Jesus' encounter with the Sadducees, who—using a far-fetched hypothetical case—present him with a challenge concerning the resurrection of the dead, a truth in which they did not believe.

They ask him, if a woman is widowed seven times, "whose wife will she be [of the seven husbands]?" (Mark 12:23). They thus seek to ridicule Jesus' teaching. But the Lord resolves this difficulty by explaining that, "When they rise from the dead, they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but they are like the angels in heaven" (Mark 12:25).

And, given the opportunity, Our Lord takes advantage of the situation to affirm the existence of the resurrection, quoting what God said to Moses in the episode of the burning bush: "I am the God of Abraham, [the] God of Isaac, and [the] God of Jacob," and adds: "He is not God of the dead but of the

living" (Mark 12:26-27). There, Jesus rebukes them for their error, because they understand neither Scripture nor the power of God; moreover, this truth was already revealed in the Old Testament: this is what Isaiah, the mother of the Maccabees, Job, and others taught.

St. Augustine described this life of eternal and loving communion as follows: "There you will know neither limits nor constraints, for you will possess everything; you will have everything, and your brother will also have everything; for the two of you—you and he—will become one, and this single 'everything' will also include the One who possesses you both."

Far from doubting the Scriptures and the merciful power of God and holding fast with all our mind and heart to this hopeful truth, we rejoice that our thirst for a full and eternal life will not go unfulfilled, for this life is assured to us in God himself, in his glory and happiness. Faced with this divine invitation, we have no choice but to nurture our longing to see God, the desire to reign forever with Him.

Thoughts on Today's Gospel

- "For if on earth He healed the sicknesses of the flesh, and made the body whole, much more will He do this in the resurrection, so that the flesh shall rise perfect and entire" (Saint Justin)

- "He is the complete man as he is placed in this world, as he has lived and suffered, who will one day be taken into God's eternity and will have a part in God himself, for eternity. This is what should fill us with deep joy." (Benedict XVI)

- "The Pharisees and many of the Lord's contemporaries hoped for the resurrection. Jesus teaches it firmly. To the Sadducees who deny it he answers, 'Is not this why you are wrong, that you know neither the scriptures nor the power of God?' (Mk 12:24). Faith in the resurrection rests on faith in God who 'is not God of the dead, but of the living' (Mk 12:27)." (Catechism of the Catholic Church, Nº 993)