

## Homily for Thirty-Second Sunday in Ordinary Time

November 5th/6th, 2022

By Deacon Richard Hay

“Heaven on Earth”

When I first start preparing a homily I typically read, reflect, and pray on the scriptures for that upcoming Sunday. After that, I start to jot down thoughts that come to me during continued prayer and reflection. This week as I focused in on the gospel that we just heard, that question the Sadducees asked Jesus about one wife and seven brothers relating to death and marriage following the resurrection was daunting.

However, as we learn, the Sadducees did not believe in the resurrection, so it was meant to be this very sensational proposal. Their goal was to see Jesus falter in his response.

Of course, Jesus knows what is in their minds and on their hearts, and as he does in many other similar situations, he doesn't directly answer the question.

Our ideas of normal relationships such as marriage, family, and friends – don't even translate to what we will experience in heaven as we hear in this gospel.

Now, I am not here to tell you how heaven is going to be because I am in the same position you are – very human and very incapable of understanding the breadth and depth of what that will be like.

However, in not answering their question, Jesus gives us some insight about being in heaven.

He says – "The children of this age marry and remarry; but those who are deemed worthy to attain to the coming age and to the resurrection of the dead neither marry nor are given in marriage. They can no longer die, for they are like angels; and they are the children of God because they are the ones who will rise."

In these words he describes heaven as a place where there will be no marriage as we know it and that there will be no more death as we know it. Why will things be different in heaven compared to here on earth?

Because as Jesus says “they are like angels”, “like the children of God” and those who will be in heaven are the “ones who will rise” from the dead and they can no longer die. Our existence is completely changed in heaven.

The reality is that the happiness and joy we will experience in heaven will surpass what have been our happiest moments in our current lives. There is simply no comparison that can do justice to what being in heaven with God is going to be like. There is no reason for us to extend our family lines through marriage and children because we will all be alive forever in heaven.

Part of the reason it is tough for us to comprehend all of this is that heaven is a profound mystery of our faith. Not a mystery like a puzzle to be solved – but a mystery of the deepest kind that is simply beyond our ability to fully understand. That is OK though because our faith helps us with this belief.

This also does not mean we can't get close to heaven here on earth. First – God gave us the sacraments as a visible sign of His grace for us, and each sacrament we receive gives us God's grace to strengthen us for

our journey in this life. Receiving God's grace brings us closer to heaven and that of course is God's plan.

However, the closest we can be to heaven in this life is by being right here where each one of us chose to be today – at church participating in the celebration of the mass. The Eucharistic miracle which happens on this altar at every single mass is described as the “source and summit” of our faith and the mass is where heaven and earth come together briefly at that summit.

In the Eucharistic Prayer, when the priest says “...and with the angels and all the saints, we declare your glory as with one voice we acclaim...” and then we respond with the Holy, Holy, Holy – that is a reminder that it is not just us here celebrating the glorious sacrifice of this mass but the angels and all the saints are present as well – it's a foretaste of heaven here on earth.

Another aspect of the mass that connects heaven to earth in a special way is Christ's presence in four very distinct ways:

- First - In His Body: In this Congregation – that means all of us here present...

- Second - In the Ministry of the Priest – who is in Persona Cristi – the person of Christ...
- Third - In the Proclamation of Scripture – especially the gospel because those are His words...
- And fourth - In the Sacrament of the Altar – in the true presence of Christ in the Most Holy Eucharist – the body, blood, soul, and divinity of Jesus...

Imagine what it might be like to see this meeting of heaven on earth during the mass. It just so happens to be possible through the eyes of a film maker.

Our homework for this week is to view a short video called “The Veil Removed.” It is available on YouTube and I also posted a link on our Facebook page.

Sit and watch that seven-minute visualization of what happens at the mass each and every time it is celebrated. Then, spend some time in prayer with the Lord and thank Him for the wonderful gift and blessing that is our faith and all it entails, including the parts which we don’t fully understand.