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Illustration

November 6, 2022 | Thirty-second Sunday in Ordinary Time

2 Mc 7:1-2, 9-14 | 2 Thes 2:16—3:5 | Lk 20:27-38

Written by
THE
FAITHFUL
DISCIPLE

GROW AS A DISCIPLE | PRAY, STUDY, ENGAGE, SERVE

My colleague grew up playing a lot of basketball, and she has pointed out the obvious: Despite the fact that the hoop is much larger than the ball, and there is a very large backboard behind it, it can be very easy to miss a shot. Depending on where you are on the floor, you have to set your sights on, and aim the ball toward, a very specific place in space or on the glass. The king in the first reading and the Sadducees in the Gospel are shooting airballs. Each one of them is, literally, not seeing the right goal. In answering the Sadducees' questions, Jesus challenges their assumptions – not about marriage, but about life after death: “Those who are deemed worthy to attain to the coming age and to the resurrection of the dead ... can no longer die ... they are the children of God ... and he is not God of the dead, but of the living.” Something even greater, beyond human understanding, awaits. The seven brothers who experienced horrible deaths rather than violate God's law knew that. We, too, hold onto hope that we will be among the living whom Jesus describes. In the meantime, we can place our trust in Jesus and focus on living according to the example he set for us. We may not know exactly what life after death will look and feel like, but we can trust the psalmist's words: “Lord, when your glory appears, my joy will be full.”

ACTION One positive thing about social media is the way it allows us to lift one another up through a simple “Like” or comment. In the same way that we “connect” with others on social media, our kind, encouraging words and Christian example in our comments can connect others to Jesus and his Church.

GO EVANGELIZE

PRAYER, INVITATION, WITNESS, ACCOMPANIMENT

I like to run races of various distances, and one of my favorite things is seeing the fun posters people hold up (“This is a lot of work for a free banana”) and hearing shouts of encouragement. Even more powerful, of course, is the encouragement of friends and family members as we face challenges or difficulties. So it's heartening to hear from St. Paul that we can count on Jesus and the Father as a source of “everlasting encouragement and good hope.” Again we are reminded that we cannot – and should not have to – do it alone. Instead, we can join Paul in asking God to “encourage [our] hearts and strengthen them in every good deed and word.” In turn, we can encourage others in their faith and daily lives, seeking to reflect God's love to those we encounter.