

Homily. 32nd Sunday in Ordinary Time. Year. C. 5/6 November 2022.

We don't live for comfort alone as many do who have made being comfortable their goal in life. We've come to know that comfort, while being no bad thing in itself, can be speedily diminished and is easily lost. The young men in the rather gory 1st reading tell us this truth, as do those millions who have sacrificed comfort for higher goals and greater causes; greater such as integrity and freedom and higher like truth, peace and the genuine respect for human rights and dignity.

This is what the young men gave away their lives to proclaim and to protect. They didn't let themselves to betray their beliefs and convictions just in order to be comfortable. They knew that if they had done so they could never be comfortable again living with themselves or with their consciences. For this same reason women and men risk their all today to protect and defend us as they have in every age and people around us put themselves in uncomfortable situations so as to help and save us.

All of this risking and sacrificing of what's comfortable is only possible because the common good matters, because the freedom and life of the many is greater than that of any individual and because, known or not, people like these have hope for a life and a future beyond what's visible. Those who fall in battles and those who are injured and killed on our streets and in our homes while helping and protecting us are remembered and honoured by us all for what they have done for us in the same way that the Maccabees brother's faith, hope and courage is still retold today.

The Sadducees group of Jesus time didn't believe in a resurrection from the dead. All that they had was this world's comfort and some vague notion of an afterlife spent in the shadows. Their tricky question tried to confuse Jesus who did believe in a new, richer and fuller life after death. In words unmistakable he spoke to them of our everliving God, the God of the same patriarchs that they honoured, and of a way of living when all men and women are one with each other in God's loving presence.

This hope is what drove Jesus forwards in his mission. It's what enabled him to embrace his many discomforts and sacrifices, even to the Cross and then through the doorway it opened into eternal life. This same hope is what inspires martyrs of every age, even to this day. It's what brings you and me to remember and to pray for our dead each November, knowing that to God and in God all people are in fact forever alive.

Lastly, it's our hope in the reality of the resurrection that calls us together here week by week, celebrating and deepening our lives in Christ so that we won't succumb to the sad old Sadducee's mistake, instead finding the fortitude we need to forego comforts when we must and even life itself as one day we all must. For as St. Paul, who gave up what was comfortable for greater and higher causes teaches us, the comfort and strength we need comes from God who in the Lord turns our hearts to the love of God, which gives us the courage in our times of adversity that comes from knowing Christ and being loved by him.