

St Michael and All Angels

Ōtautahi / Christchurch

9 November 2025 / 32nd Sunday Ordinary Time

Homily

Luke 20:27–38 NRSVUE

The Question about the Resurrection

Some Sadducees, those who say there is no resurrection, came to him and asked him a question: “Teacher, Moses wrote for us that if a man’s brother dies leaving a wife but no children, the man shall marry the widow and raise up children for his brother. Now there were seven brothers; the first married a woman and died childless; then the second and the third married her, and so in the same way all seven died childless. Finally, the woman also died. In the resurrection, therefore, whose wife will the woman be? For the seven had married her.”

Jesus said to them, “Those who belong to this age marry and are given in marriage, but those who are considered worthy of a place in that age and in the resurrection from the dead neither marry nor are given in marriage. Indeed, they cannot die anymore, because they are like angels and are children of God, being children of the resurrection. And the fact that the dead are raised, Moses himself showed, in the story about the bush, where he speaks of the Lord as the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. Now he is God not of the dead but of the living, for to him all of them are alive.”

Children of the Resurrection

In the early 1970s, a British rock musician named T. Rex pioneered the musical genre known today as 'Glam Rock.' The objective of this new musical genre was to promote escapism by rejecting the 'authenticity' valued by the previous generation of rock, blues and folk musicians.

Glam rock celebrated illusion, artifice, self-creation and performance instead of 'truth and sincerity.' The Glam rock social movement championed individualism by escaping from mundane reality into a fantasy world of fame, hedonism and luxury. This focus on self-glorification and decadence was a 'rebellion against the rebellion' of the previous 'Flower Child' decade of the 1960s.

During his career, T. Rex wrote a successful song called "Children of the Revolution." In this song, he asserts that society "will not be able to fool the children of the revolution." Presumably, because Glam Rock's ideology has made them impervious to conforming to long-held social values.

In many respects, this type of ideology is nothing new, as throughout the centuries, people have often developed cultural movements that focus on personal pleasure and empowerment, primarily to give themselves a sense of spiritual autonomy, particularly when faced with the uncomfortable themes of life and death.

So, in a short few decades of twentieth-century culture, alternative views shifted from valuing the 'Flower Children' to embracing the 'Children of the Revolution.' And with its promises of being on the "right side of the revolution" and its announcement of freedom, self-realisation, and leaving the current world behind, it appeared like an attractive idea; for many, it still remains so today.

However, while the musical revolution promised new hope, it often left people unfulfilled and broken by its relational isolation and lack of empathy.

All love tends to become like that which it loves

Thankfully, however, and in stark contrast to this position, our Gospel reading offers us an alternative perspective: not to become “Children of the Revolution,” but rather to become “Children of the Resurrection.” In Luke’s Gospel, we read that Jesus affirms the resurrection not only as a promise from God but also as a present reality in him and a vital part of God’s creational plan.

Consequently, resurrection is best understood not merely as a continuation of life or immortality but as a transformation of life itself. This is why Jesus tells the Sadducees that in the ‘age to come,’ we will be ‘like the angels,’ not because we will be in heaven but because life in the coming age transcends human categories of gender, marriage, and mortality. For our earthly relationships, as beautiful as they are, only foreshadow something greater — namely, our relational union with God, in whom every love will be perfected and made whole.

Furthermore, the resurrected are “like angels” because they share in the life of God — a spiritual existence in which death no longer reigns. This theme of the resurrected life in our Gospel highlights the transformation of mortal life into divine life in Christ, sometimes referred to as *Theosis*, whereby human beings “become by grace what God is by nature,” by sharing in his divine life through Jesus Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit.

In today’s Gospel, Jesus reminds the Sadducees of the story of Moses and the burning bush. He points them back to Exodus, where Moses hears “I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.” By quoting this, Jesus draws the listener’s attention to the present tense of ‘I am,’ not ‘I was.’ By emphasising this, Jesus reveals a profound truth — that the same Lord who walked with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob is alive and active in every age, including ours.

In reminding the Sadducees and us of this truth, Jesus invites us to trust that the God who was faithful to our ancestors remains faithful now. The God of Abraham, “the God of the living,” is the God who is here with us now, calling each of us to deeper faith.

Christ's reference to the book of Exodus serves as a powerful affirmation that God's covenantal relationship with humanity is not limited by the boundaries of time or death. When God identifies himself as the Lord of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, people who had long since passed, he reveals that these figures are still remembered, honoured, and in a living relationship with him. This points to the continuity of personal existence before God and highlights the foundational truth that the Lord is "the God of the living, not of the dead."

This hope underscores both God's faithfulness and the enduring nature of his covenant. The relationship God establishes with his people is not broken or tarnished by death; instead, it endures, sustained by God's unwavering commitment to those whom he loves. Through the resurrection, God's promise is fulfilled not in material wealth, lineage, or status, but in the gift of life — with God himself.

Conclusion

The resurrection is not only about how God transforms death, but also about how we live now. For if we identify ourselves with the 'God of the living,' then we live with hope, even when faced with loss and grief. We see every person as someone destined for eternal life, deserving of dignity and love. We face our own mortality not with fear, but with trust.

Therefore, hope in the resurrection gives us the courage to love more deeply, forgive more freely, and live more joyfully. Because God is the God of the living, we live today with courage and faith.

Our lives are no longer lived in the shadow of rebellion and fear. Because of God's covenant and his faithfulness towards us, we have become 'Children of God,' freed from the constraints imposed by the categories of this present age, and our identity is now defined by God, whose promise offers us a new existence beyond our expectations.

Closing Prayer

All-loving and faithful God, we thank you for the promise of new life in Christ, for the hope that transforms — not only our hearts, but also life itself.

Make us true Children of the Resurrection, A people of courage, compassion, and joy. Free us from the illusions of self-glory and draw us ever deeper into the life of your Son, in whom all things are made new.

Through Jesus Christ our Lord, we pray. Amen.