

God of the living • Breaking open the word

Readings

2 Maccabees 7:1,2, 9-14

“It is my choice to die at the hands of men with the hope God gives of being raised up by him; but for you, there will be no resurrection to life.”

2 Thessalonians 2:16-3:5

May the Lord direct your hearts to the love of God and to the endurance of Christ.

Luke 20:27-38

“...he is not God of the dead, but of the living, for to him all are alive.”

You can read the full text of this Sunday's readings here:

[Scriptures for the Thirty-second Sunday in Ordinary Time, Cycle C](#)

Reflection

The first reading is a little hard to handle—it includes the arrest, torture and murder of seven Jewish brothers and their mother. Their captors said that they would let them go if they would just break God's laws and pray to their god instead. They refused—it was more important to them to gain heaven by their faithfulness than it was to avoid temporary pain. They did not give in, and they accepted their martyrdom.

The second reading acknowledges the tension that we all live with; our desire to do what is right and all of the other forces that try and derail us from our goal. The community

prays for those who have received the letter that they will remember the hope that God has given them and be encouraged to stay strong.

In the Gospel, Jesus is questioned by some Sadducees, who didn't believe in anything they couldn't see—not angels, and not heaven. They believed that when we die, we cease to exist. So, they tried to stump Jesus (bad idea) by throwing him a scenario where a woman marries seven brothers (becoming a widow between each brother). It was the tradition back then that, if a man got married but died before any children were born, the next brother would marry his wife and the first child they had would be for the deceased brother—that's why the lady in the story kept marrying brothers. Anyway, they asked Jesus whose wife she would be in heaven. Jesus tells them that, that's not how heaven works. It's way bigger than our experience here. We are so much more than what we know on earth. God is the God of the living—and life in God is eternal and has no boundaries.

Break open the word with your family

Kids

Who is your favorite Saint (that's anybody in heaven)? When you meet them in heaven, what would you like to talk to them about?

Teens

The seven brothers and their mother in the story of Maccabees were extremely strong and brave. Many people would not have made the decision that they did, but many people are faced with that decision every day even in our times. What do you think your response would be in their situation?

Adults

What does it mean to you that God is the “God of the living”? How does this apply to the losses in your life?

A little lectio

The ancient practice of prayerfully reflecting on bits of Scripture is known as *lectio divina*. Want to try it out with your family? Head over to [Lectio Divina for Kids](#) to find out how to adapt this prayer practice for your kids.

A little Bible study

Want to do a little Bible study with your kids? Here are some tips:

- During Ordinary Time, the Church pairs the Old Testament and New Testament readings in a way that each sheds light on the other. Ask your kids to look for the common theme connecting the two readings. (Sometimes it’s obvious, sometimes it is subtle.) How does the “dialogue” between the readings help you understand them better?
- Get a New American Bible, Revised Edition, and take a look at the footnotes for these readings. How do they change your understanding of what is going on?
- Take a look at the context for the readings—what happens before, or after?
- Read the NABRE’s introduction to the book of the Bible that the readings are taken from. How does that help you understand the readings?
- If you don’t have a copy of the NABRE at home, you can view it online at the USCCB website at the [Daily Readings](#) web page.

For even more resources for breaking open this Sunday's readings, head over to [The Sunday Website](#).