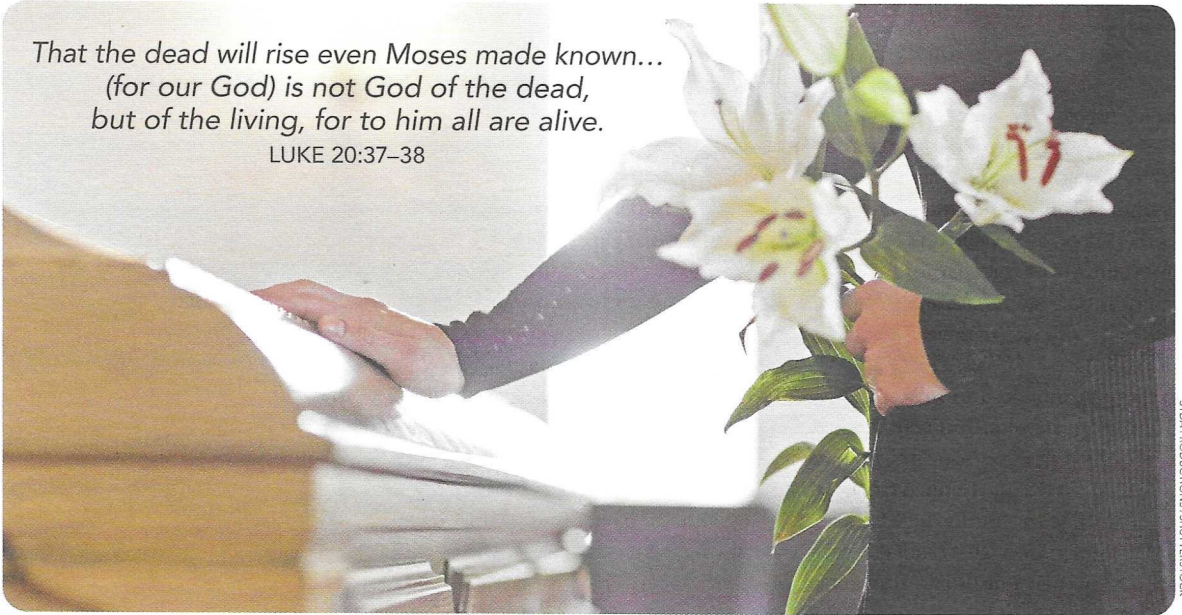


*That the dead will rise even Moses made known...
(for our God) is not God of the dead,
but of the living, for to him all are alive.*
LUKE 20:37–38



SYDA PRODUCTIONS SHUTTERSTOCK

I Believe in the Resurrection of the Dead

We say this every time we pray the Creed. It is such a familiar statement that we might fail to be astounded.

The ancient Israelites did not think that death was the ultimate end. They believed the dead went to a place called Sheol. This was a place just for the dead; there was neither reward nor punishment. Some scholars think that it was only much later, when Israel encountered Greek culture, that we see a more developed teaching on the afterlife. We hear that teaching in the first reading. Facing martyrdom for his faith, one of the brothers insisted, “The King of the universe will raise us up to live again forever” (2 Maccabees 7:9). His faith was based on his assurance that his covenant bond with God would not be severed, even by death.

In the Gospel, the Sadducees are trying to make Jesus look ridiculous. There was a custom that if a man died without an heir, his brother was to have relations with the

widow. The child born of that union was considered the legal heir of the deceased man. This custom was meant to ensure that the inheritance remained within the family. The Sadducees, who do not believe in resurrection, are mocking Jesus with their question. Jesus, aware of their intention, does not fall into their trap. Instead, he replies that in the coming age, marriage will not be necessary because resurrected life will not end. Finally, if God is a God of the living and not the dead, as Moses declared, then all are somehow resurrected.

Sr. Dianne Bergant, CSA

FOR *Reflection*

- ★ *Reflect on the implications in your life of this teaching on the resurrection of the dead.*
- ★ *How prepared are you for the inevitable reality of death?*