

**THIRTY-SECOND SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME**  
**Year C      November 10, 2013**

**Theme: Who will be my wife?**

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Greg had married his high school sweetheart, Mary Ellen, immediately after he graduated from college.

Their love just seemed to grow better all the time; they had squabbles, of course, but they were best friends.

Their two boys brought them closer too and they loved being a family with them.

The day Mary Ellen, then age 32, came home and told him she had advanced breast cancer was the worst day of Greg's life, at least until the day, only thirteen months later when he buried her.

For weeks after that he felt like he could hardly even catch his breath, but then he realized he had two boys – Mary Ellen's boys – and he needed to raise them for her.

Now, ten years later, those boys were teen agers almost ready to move out to college, and he, Greg, had met a woman at work, a wonderful woman, named Jocelyn.

He had called his pastor for an appointment: *"Father, he said, what I had with Mary Ellen was so special I feel like I am betraying her every time I'm with Jocelyn."*

*"Besides, when we all die and go home to the Lord who will be my wife: I once loved Mary Ellen so very much but now I want the chance to love Jocelyn and be her husband."*

Perhaps the situation the Sadducees presented to Jesus seems far-fetched and ridiculous, but that of Greg is not at all.

And don't all of us wonder what heaven, the afterlife, is going to be like?

In his response Jesus contrasts the way things operate **"in this age,"** that is in our current time and place, with how they will **"in the coming age,"** in the age of the resurrection.

**"The children of this age marry and remarry; but those who are deemed worthy to attain to the coming age and to the resurrection of the dead neither marry nor are given in marriage."**

But, why, we might ask Jesus, will there be no need for marriage in the coming age of the resurrection?

Why can't we carry our marriages with us into that coming age?

Because, one, since there will be no more death there will be no need for pro-creation – one of the principal reasons for marriage.

And two, in the age of resurrection all will be perfectly happy and content in the fullness of God's presence and no one will need a life-partner, a helpmate – the second principal reason for marriage.

Thus, in the age of resurrection there is no longer a need for marriage.

But, Greg might ask his pastor, will I know Mary Ellen and Jocelyn in heaven?

Unfortunately, Jesus did not directly address that question in his response to the Sadducees, nor anywhere else in his teaching.

However, he did say in today's text that our God is the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob – three recognizable patriarchs of three successive generations in the Hebrew Scriptures.

So, yes, it appears we will indeed recognize those who have gone before us in the age of resurrection.

And since we are to be happy and at peace in the perfection of God, Greg probably need not worry of Mary Ellen and Jocelyn being jealous of each other in the age of resurrection!

Of course, there are those married folk, who really are hoping that the words “Until death do us part” mean they finally will be rid of the big louse or the old coot and they won’t have to put up with their ex into eternity!

When you get right down to it, though, as our own St. Paul noted to the early Christians in Corinth, we **“human beings can’t even begin to conceive of what God has prepared for those who love him.”**

We live in **“this age”**, the age of sin and death; we have but limited vision and imagination.

Someday – pray God soon -- in what Jesus called **“the age to come,”** the age of resurrection, God has prepared a reality beyond anything our death-constrained and sin-contaminated minds can comprehend.

For now we must settle for appetizers such as this Eucharist:

---fleeting glimpses of a time when God and humanity will be one;

---a mere taste of food that will forever satisfy our hungry hearts

---a sip of wine that will bring eternal joy to our souls.