

GOD IS KING - THE IMPORTANCE OF INTEGRITY

At the time of Jesus, the Pharisees were the religious leaders in Palestine. They were the popular experts in theology and morality. One of the doctrines they believed in and taught was the resurrection of the dead. On the other hand, the Sadducees, the political leaders didn't believe in the resurrection of the dead. The Sadducees collaborated with the Romans and enjoyed all the pleasures that come with wealth and power. If they had believed in the Resurrection and judgment after death, they probably wouldn't have been so quick to make compromises with justice and truth just to keep a tight grip on their privileged but earthly position. This makes us wonder: Did the Sadducees start living worldly, pleasure-centered lives because they had lost faith in the Resurrection, or did they lose faith in the Resurrection because they started living worldly, pleasure-centered lives? There is an old proverb that says if we don't live according to what we believe, we will soon believe according to how we live. This is a danger for us in the Church today, because the predominant way of life in our society is not Christian. In fact, the Church's moral teachings are laughed at and even violently opposed. This of course makes it harder for us to live them out - no one likes to be laughed at, no one likes to be excluded from mainstream culture, criticized, labeled or hated. In the face of these challenges we can lose courage and compromise but if we do, we risk ending up like the Sadducees, losing the very faith that gives true meaning to our lives. This is why it is so important to hold fast to the teachings of Jesus while avoiding those of this culture in which we live.

God bless,
Deacon John