

# Dear Brothers and Sisters



The Sadducees, who deny that there is a resurrection, confront Jesus with a Mosaic conundrum. They make a fictional argument based on the Levirate law. Having spun the tale of a poor woman, who marries and is then widowed by seven brothers, they ask whose wife she will be in the resurrection.

The Levirate law dictated that the brother of a deceased man is obliged to marry his brother's widow, and the widow is obliged to marry her deceased husband's brother.

At the root of all this is money and inheritance. Religious professor Tikva Frymer-Kensky points out the economic implications of a levirate marriage: "The first child born to the brother's widow would be deemed the heir of the deceased brother, and entitled to claim the deceased brother's share of the inheritance. If the deceased brother was the firstborn son, the levirate child's inheritance was the double share to which the deceased was entitled. However, if the deceased brother were childless, the living brother would be entitled to inherit an increased share, or if the oldest surviving son a double share of the increased share."

In other words, the Sadducees betray what is in their heart. Since they do not believe in the resurrection, heaven is closed for them, and they fixate on property and money at all costs. The Levirate law was made not to protect the well being of a widow, but to make sure the family's land and inheritance did not leave the clan. Very sad.

We, on the other hand, are a people who not only believe in the resurrection, but already experience it in Jesus Christ. We have just celebrated this fact over three wonderful days this past week: Halloween, the eve of All Hallows, in which we mocked the demons and evil spirits, because they have been despoiled and vanquished; All Saints Day, where we celebrated a great multitude, of every race and tongue, who live in the fullness of the resurrection; and All Souls Day, the commemoration of all the Faithful Departed, those whom we know with certainty are not gone forever, but who await us on the shore of the Resurrection.

The Sadducees can sit in their corner, counting their money and fretting over material things. We, on the other hand, are called to live as citizens of heaven.

Fr. Sean