Faith, Hope, and Love Lesson 25 Mar 24 Acts 24 Trial and captivity

Q1. (Faith) St. Paul describes the Jewish belief in the resurrection of the dead and the judgment of both the righteous and the unrighteous. This hope is also expressed in the Wisdom of Solomon. How might the Sadducees, among whom would be the High Priest, be among those who would experience the “unexpected salvation” while we, like the Christians in the time of St. Paul, have the hope of the resurrection of the body and judgment? (Note the Catechism specifically references this verse from Acts)

Acts 24:14-15

14 But this I do admit to you, that according to the Way, which they call a sect,   
I worship the God of our ancestors and I believe everything   
that is in accordance with the law and written in the prophets.

15 I have the same hope in God as they themselves have   
that there will be a resurrection of the righteous and the unrighteous.

Wisdom 4:20-5:2

20 Fearful shall they come, at the counting up of their sins,   
and their lawless deeds shall convict them to their face.

1 Then shall the righteous one with great assurance confront his oppressors   
who set at nought his labors.

2 Seeing this, the wicked shall be shaken with dreadful fear,   
and be amazed at the unexpected salvation.

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The resurrection of all the dead, "of both the just and the unjust," will precede the Last Judgment. This will be "the hour when all who are in the tombs will hear [the Son of man's] voice and come forth, those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of judgment.

Christ will come "in his glory, and all the angels with him. ...   
Before him will be gathered all the nations, and he will separate them one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats, and he will place the sheep at his right hand, but the goats at the left. ...   
And they will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life (Matthew 25:31-32, 46).

Q2. (Hope) There is always an element of anxiety about judgment, but, as a faithful Christian, how can your hope be founded on confidence and trust because of your perseverance to the end in faith in the Lord and your works of charity?

Q3. (Love) Works of charity of the righteous are listed in the Parable of the Sheep and the Goats in Matthew 25 referenced in the Catechism reference of the previous question.) As Catholics, what do we traditionally call these charitable works of love?

Matthew 25:37-40

37 Then the righteous will answer him and say, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink?

38 When did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you?

39 When did we see you ill or in prison, and visit you?’

40 And the king will say to them in reply, ‘Amen, I say to you, whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me.’

A1. The Sadducees did not believe in the resurrection of the body, nor in a judgment after death. They believed that all reward and punishment occurred in this life. As Solomon says in Wisdom, they are in for an unexpected surprise.

As a Christian, through my faith in Jesus Christ and my dedication to good works of charity and mercy have the sure and certain hope of the resurrection of my body and a judgment of eternal life in heaven if I persevere to the end in faith.

A2. We have been promised and I trust in that promise, endeavor to keep strong my faith in Jesus Christ and do the good works He commanded of me.

The just judgment of God, 6 who will repay everyone according to his works: 7 eternal life to those who seek glory, honor, and immortality through perseverance in good works, 8 but wrath and fury to those who selfishly disobey the truth and obey wickedness. (Romans 2:5-8)

A3. These are known to Catholics as the Corporal Works of Mercy.

There is also a corresponding set of Spiritual Works of mercy

CCC2447 The works of mercy are charitable actions by which we come to the aid of our neighbor in his spiritual and bodily necessities. Instructing, advising, consoling, comforting are spiritual works of mercy, as are forgiving and bearing wrongs patiently. The corporal works of mercy consist especially in feeding the hungry, sheltering the homeless, clothing the naked, visiting the sick and imprisoned, and burying the dead. Among all these, giving alms to the poor is one of the chief witnesses to fraternal charity: it is also a work of justice pleasing to God