

Gospel Reflection for Sunday, October 18, 2020
Twenty-ninth Sunday in Ordinary Time



Paying Taxes to the Emperor

Opening Prayer:

Lord God, we open our hearts, minds and souls to worship you. Thank you that today we dwell in your kingdom and live in your presence. Thank you that as we gather together we join with all Catholic Christians across the world to glorify your holy name. Come be with us, inspire us and lead us in our time together. We ask all this in the beautiful name of Jesus. Amen.

Gospel Reading: Matthew 22:15-21 (Paying Taxes to the Emperor)

¹⁵ Then the Pharisees went off and plotted how they might entrap him in speech. ¹⁶ They sent their disciples to him, with the Herodians, saying, "Teacher, we know that you are a truthful man and that you teach the way of God in accordance with the truth. And you are not concerned with anyone's opinion, for you do not regard a person's status. ¹⁷ Tell us, then, what is your opinion: Is it lawful to pay the census tax to Caesar or not?" ¹⁸ Knowing their malice, Jesus said, "Why are you testing me, you hypocrites? ¹⁹ Show me the coin that pays the census tax." Then they handed him the Roman coin. ²⁰ He said to them, "Whose image is this and whose inscription?" ²¹ They replied, "Caesar's." At that he said to them, "Then repay to Caesar what belongs to Caesar and to God what belongs to God."

Reflections Questions:

1. What was the goal of the Pharisees in asking this question?
2. Does Verse 16 express their true thoughts about Jesus? Then why did they say these things? What may they have hoped to gain through flattery?
3. Why do you think some Jews may have advocated not paying tax to Caesar? What was their evil intent (Verse 18)?
4. How did Jesus answer them? What is the essence of what He is saying? Does Jesus' answer relate to our lives today? How?
5. Should Christians pay taxes to a corrupt or evil government? (Ex. Taxes going towards unjust war and abortion)

Group Intercessions: Invitation for group members to share their prayer intentions

Closing Prayer:

Lord, your word is a lamp to our feet and a light to our path. Thank you that we can live in your light and walk in your truth. May the things that you have revealed and thoughts that we have shared dwell in our hearts and stir us to action. We ask all this in the precious name of Jesus. Amen.