

## **Your Lourdes Sunday Liturgy at Home**

29<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time – World Mission Sunday

October 18, 2020

“Then repay to Caesar what belongs to Caesar  
and to God what belongs to God.”

– Matthew 22:21

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Unfortunately, this response by Jesus has been the subject of much misunderstanding through the years. It has often been interpreted to mean that Jesus is separating our civic duties and obligations from the requirements of our faith. The result of this view is to create two separate worlds: one about our social and political life, and another about our faith life. This is not what Jesus intended.

What this Gospel confrontation is meant to do is urge each of us to recognize to whom we ultimately belong and in whose image we have been created. It's reminding us that our allegiance, our fidelity is always to the one true Lord – not to any modern-day Caesar. Consequently, there are not two separate worlds we live in, only one: “what belongs to God.” This conviction is what can influence every dimension of how we live and permeate every step we take, every choice we make.

“Who in their right mind starts a debate with Jesus and expects to win?” In today's Gospel, the Pharisees' henchmen try to trap Jesus by posing an either-or quandary. The tax in question was imposed on every adult in Judea, and was to be paid with a Roman coin. Israelite nationalists – the Zealots – resisted the tax to the point of a wave of armed rebellions, the last of which brought on the destruction of the Temple in the years right before Matthew wrote his Gospel. Additionally, the *denarius* – a coin used to pay a day's minimum wage – was used for payment of this tax. The *denarius* was stamped with an image of the current emperor Tiberius Caesar and it called him the “son of God” – which is not at all in keeping with Jewish sensibilities of shunning graven images and having other gods but the one God.

To say the least, this was an emotionally charged question designed to get Jesus in trouble with one camp or the other: the Philistines and the people in the streets could see him as a turncoat toady to the Romans, or the Herodians (the courtiers of King Herod) who cooperated with the occupying forces would report him to the Roman governor, Pilate, as a subversive.

Perhaps Jesus had meditated on today's reading from Isaiah and took his approach from the prophet's explanation of God dealing with the world. Who were they as a chosen people if God was willing to work through others? Who, really, was God? The second question is the key. God, through Isaiah, was calling the people to go beyond their tribalism, to accept the implications of their own profession of faith. They should have noticed that twice in this short reading God said, "I am the Lord, there is no other."

They were facing a question that eventually bother most monotheists, namely Was God exclusively their god or was God bigger than their orthodoxy? Theoretically, the answer is a no-brainer. In practice, affirming faith in God as Creator and Lord of history humbles believers of every stripe; it recognizes God's freedom to act with us, for us and even in spite of us, through any means God chooses to use, without seeking our approval or conforming to our doctrine.

In Isaiah 45, we hear about God's plan to save Israel through the military leadership of a pagan Persian (Iranian) king working for his own advancement. While in the long run, that was very good news, it was also a slap in the face of Jewish national pride. Worse yet, when God referred to Cyrus as "anointed," the implication was that the Davidic royal line had come to an end. That was a bitter pill. This pagan who didn't even know who God was..... had been picked as the one to save the chosen people!

Meanwhile, back to Jesus and the hit squad sent to trip him up. Their first setback came when they inadvertently proved that they carried the sacrilegious coin with them. That in itself was a capitulation to Rome. Then, given the fact that they were in possession of a "graven image," Jesus got them to admit whose image

it was. With that, Jesus pointed out that the coin obviously must belong to the one whose face it portrayed. (It surely couldn't belong to faithful Israelites!) Today's Gospel selection left out the last line of the story (Matthew 22:22): "They were amazed and leaving him they went away." That's a diplomatic way of saying, "They slinked off with their tails between their legs."

Now it all comes full circle. The final answer is that absolutely everything and everyone — even a mighty ruler like Tiberius Caesar or Cyrus — belongs to God. God's Word is intended to lead us beyond our limited, self-aggrandizing dogmatism to recognize the image of God in human persons, including those who do not share our theology. Paul reminded us that our faith is a result of God's graced calling. Isaiah reminds us that only God is God, and that God can work through anyone. Jesus, with some humor, calls us to remember what it means that we ourselves belong to God and only to God.

When they had to admit that they were carrying an image of Caesar, he told the henchmen to return the coin to the one to whom it obviously belonged. The unspoken question that followed that statement asked where could one find the image of God? According to scripture, men and women are the true images of God (Genesis 1:27). Giving a day's wage to Caesar is no big deal. The real question is whether we are ready to give our very selves to God.

Here's paraphrase of Matthew 22:15-21 translating the parable to mid-Twentieth Century rural Georgia from Clarence Jordan's The Cotton Patch Gospel:

<sup>15</sup> Then the good church members got together and hatched a plot to trap Jesus in something he said. So they sent him a committee with some FBI men.

"Doctor," they said, "we know that you are a straight shooter, and that you tell God's way like it is. And it doesn't matter to you who you're talking to, because you pay no attention to a man's standing. Now please give us your opinion on this matter: Should one pay Federal taxes or not?"

Catching on to their trick, Jesus asked, "Why are you putting

me in a bind, you phonies? Show me a dollar,” They brought him a dollar, and he said, “Whose engraving is on it?” They said, “The government’s.” “All right, then,” he replied, “give the government’s things to the government and God’s things to God.” When they heard that, it bowled them over and they laid off him and left.

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29<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time – World Mission Sunday

**Prelude:** Sing along with Leon C. Roberts and the Music Ministry of Roberts’ Revival in “This Is The Day”:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fK3XmctnEmE>

**Leader:** The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the Fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

**All:** And with your spirit.

**Penitential Act**

Lord Jesus, you were subject, like us, to many loyalties:

Lord, have mercy.

Christ Jesus, you were challenged in your commitment to God:

Christ, have mercy.

Lord Jesus, you showed us how to meet challenges without fear:

Lord, have mercy.

**Opening Prayer**

O God, whose image we bear,<sup>[SEP]</sup> and whose name we carry,<sup>[SEP]</sup> yours is the world and all it contains. Recall us to our true allegiance, so that above the powers and rulers of this world you alone may claim our fullest loyalty and love.

We make our prayer through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God forever and ever. Let the church say – Amen.

Listen to “God Is” presented by the Rev. James Cleveland and the Southern California Community Choir:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GauUHGDITXk>

Then move into reading today’s Scriptures.

**Readings for 29<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year A  
October 18, 2020**

**1st Reading – Isaiah 45:1, 4-6**

<sup>1</sup> Thus says the LORD to his anointed, Cyrus, whose right hand I grasp, subduing nations before him, and making kings run in his service, opening doors before him and leaving the gates unbarred:  
<sup>4</sup> For the sake of Jacob, my servant, of Israel, my chosen one, I have called you by your name, giving you a title, though you knew me not.  
<sup>5</sup> I am the LORD and there is no other, there is no God besides me. It is I who arm you, though you know me not, <sup>6</sup> so that toward the rising and the setting of the sun people may know that there is none besides me. I am the LORD, there is no other.

**Responsorial Psalm – 96:1, 3, 4-5, 7-8, 9-10**

**R. Give the Lord glory and honor.**

<sup>1</sup> Sing to the LORD a new song;<sup>[L] [SEP]</sup>  
sing to the LORD, all you lands.<sup>[L] [SEP]</sup>  
<sup>3</sup> Tell his glory among the nations;<sup>[L] [SEP]</sup>  
among all peoples, his wondrous deeds.<sup>[L] [SEP]</sup>

**R. Give the Lord glory and honor.**

<sup>4</sup> For great is the LORD and highly to be praised;<sup>[L] [SEP]</sup>  
awesome is he, beyond all gods.<sup>[L] [SEP]</sup>  
<sup>5</sup> For all the gods of the nations are things of nought,<sup>[L] [SEP]</sup>  
but the LORD made the heavens.<sup>[L] [SEP]</sup>

**R. Give the Lord glory and honor.**

<sup>7</sup> Give to the LORD, you families of nations,<sup>[L] [SEP]</sup>  
give to the LORD glory and praise;<sup>[L] [SEP]</sup>  
<sup>8</sup> give to the LORD the glory due his name!<sup>[L] [SEP]</sup>  
Bring gifts, and enter his courts.

**R. Give the Lord glory and honor.**

<sup>9</sup> Worship the LORD, in holy attire;<sup>[L] [SEP]</sup>  
tremble before him, all the earth;<sup>[L] [SEP]</sup>  
<sup>10</sup> say among the nations: The LORD is king,<sup>[L] [SEP]</sup>  
he governs the peoples with equity.<sup>[L] [SEP]</sup>

**R. Give the Lord glory and honor.**

## **2nd Reading – 1 Thessalonians 1:1-5B**

<sup>1</sup> Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy to the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: grace to you and peace.

<sup>2</sup> We give thanks to God always for all of you, remembering you in our prayers, unceasingly <sup>3</sup> calling to mind your work of faith and labor of love and endurance in hope of our Lord Jesus Christ, before our God and Father, <sup>4</sup> knowing, brothers and sisters loved by God, how you were chosen. <sup>5AB</sup> For our gospel did not come to you in word alone, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with much conviction.

## **Gospel – Matthew 22:15-21**

<sup>15</sup> The Pharisees went off and plotted how they might entrap Jesus in speech. <sup>16</sup> 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. <sup>17</sup> Tell us, then, what is your opinion: Is it lawful to pay the census tax to Caesar or not?” <sup>18</sup> Knowing their malice, Jesus said, “Why are you testing me, you hypocrites? <sup>19</sup> Show me the coin that pays the census tax.” Then they handed him the Roman coin. <sup>20</sup> He said to them, “Whose image is this and whose inscription?” <sup>21</sup> 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.”

The Gospel of the Lord.....Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ.

## **Reflection Prompts:**

First, sing along with “He’s Blessing Me (Over and Over Again)” by Norris Garner and presented by the Gospel Music Workshop of America mass choir

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K2HEU1NOJkM>

- What “things of Caesar” are presently at odds with “the things of God” in your life?

St. Paul sings of the virtues of the church community in Thessalonica, Greece and praises their “work of faith and labor of love and endurance in hope.”

- Ask yourself how you have worked in faith, labored in love for all humanity, and endured in hope.
- Where could you improve? What would be the first steps?

### **Meditation Prompts:**

In honor of this Month of Mary, first, listen to “Mary’s Canticle” presented by composer Leon C. Roberts and the Music Ministry of Roberts’ Revival: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l2hMgiZLDbE>

- Mary’s “being proclaims the greatest of the Lord”. Ask the Spirit to help you become ever more centered in the “things of God.”

GENERAL INTERCESSIONS – October 18, 2020  
TWENTY-NINTH SUNDAY OF THE CHURCH YEAR

**Presider:** Brothers and sisters, on this World Mission weekend, let us pray for the needs of our world and for the insight and empathy to respond to those needs.

### **Worship Leader**

1. For Pope Francis, first missionary of the Church, and for all missionaries and martyrs who give their lives to preach the Gospel to all nations. We pray: **Hear us, O God.** (ASSEMBLY RESPONDS: **Hear us, O God.**)
2. For the leaders of nations, that they may be committed to justice for all, especially indigenous peoples and those persecuted for their faith. We pray: **Hear us, O God.**
3. For all our leaders to be dedicated to preserving the planet and building a world at peace. We pray: **Hear us, O God.**
4. For all those who promote interfaith dialogue and seek common ground. We pray: **Hear us, O God.**
5. For all those who are struggling with depression or despair in this isolating time of pandemic, that they find solace in prayer and an outreaching community. We pray: **Hear us, O God.**
6. For all those recovering and rebuilding after hurricanes, floods or wildfires. We pray: **Hear us, O God.**

7. For all who seek healing from substance use disorders and mental health issues, that they find help and mutual support. We pray: **Hear us, O God.**
8. For an end to the Death Penalty and Human Trafficking, especially in Georgia. We pray: **Hear us, O God.**
9. For displaced persons, refugees, and all driven from their homes, that they be welcomed. We pray: **Hear us, O God.**
10. For all those who are separated from us by infirmity, especially those listed in our bulletin, and for all those living with HIV and AIDS, that they know our community's care for them. We pray: **Hear us, O God.**
11. For all the dead, that they see God face to face, especially Malana DeJean and Wilbert David Sweet for whom this Mass is being celebrated. We pray: **Hear us, O God.**
12. Please share any intention you have [PAUSE.....] as well as all our own needs. We pray: **Hear us, O God.**

**Presider:** Loving God, hear the prayers we lay before you today, and give us the power to discern each that you are the source from whom all blessings flow. We pray in the name of your Son, Jesus, who teaches us to honor you above all. LET THE CHURCH SAY...AMEN!

Sing or recite "The Lord's Prayer." Then, hear "Better" by Hezekiah Walker:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vFgkZX9Z65M>

### **Closing Prayer**

God ever faithful and true, form our wills at all times to accord with your own, and so direct our hearts, that we may render you undivided service. We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God forever and ever. Let the Church say.....AMEN!

### **Closing Hymn**

Sing along with "I'm So Glad Jesus Lifted Me" presented by Chris Turner: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XfKt-nnvhFY>

