

Gospel Reflection

Do you resist paying taxes or obeying authorities? Do you always disagree with a particular person at work or in your household? Do you need people to do as you say? Are you afraid of making decisions? Of saying “no”? If so, you are engaged in struggles over your own and others’ power in your life. This week’s scriptures provide a way of resolving many of those struggles without taking sides.

The readings leave little doubt as to who holds the real power in the world. It is “the LORD, and there is no other” (Isaiah 45:6) who anoints Cyrus and grasps him by the right hand (the hand of power), making him victorious and giving the Israelites their freedom. The psalm tells us to give glory and honor to the Lord, who is “beyond all gods” and “governs the peoples with equity” (Psalm 96:4, 10). Paul gives thanks to God, whose power is at work in the gospel Paul preached and in the Thessalonians themselves. Finally, in Jesus’ power struggle with the Pharisees, he says, “Repay . . . to God what belongs to God” (Matthew 22:21). God is the power above all human powers – in government, business, the Church, and our own families. We owe God all “glory and honor” (Psalm 96:7), thanks, loyalty, and our lives.

We are to give praise and pay tribute to God as the one and only source of true power in our lives. When we do, our ordinary power struggles can more easily be resolved. Like the Thessalonians, we discover the power within ourselves. The Holy Spirit empowers us to live in faith, hope, and love. We no longer feel we must dominate others. We are compelled neither to resist those who have power over us nor always to give in to them. We stop fearing our own power. God’s power within us and over all human powers gives us confidence, courage, and humility in every power struggle we may encounter.

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KEEPING FAITH FIRST FAMILY FUN

Matthew 22:15-21

G G Q J Y S T P Q N I O C
O P V Z Y I J A E N C Z X
E T H L H X A Q S R E Y B
C H C A T E A C I U N H K
F A E Q R T R U T H S E S
P T E E I I B O K C U E I
H I P S P N S K D F S J J
K A S T A T G E H I T J Y
Y C I P A R T N E G A M I
O O N T V T U X N S X N X
N M U L O J J I F C D O S
H S Z L A W F U L H P T B
A U P H O R Y V W Z P Q T

Find these words from the Gospel passage.

CAESAR	CENSUS TAX	COIN
ENTRAP	HERODIANS	IMAGE
JESUS	INSCRIPTION	LAWFUL
STATUS	PLOTTED	REPAY
SPEECH	PHARISEES	TRUTH

Disciple's Reflection & Questions of the Week

*Twenty-Ninth Sunday in Ordinary Time
10/19/2008*

*Matthew 22:15-21
Faith-Sharing
Questions of the Week*



Our Lady of the Assumption

435 Berkeley Ave.
Claremont, CA
www.olaclaremont.org

Call to Prayer

We begin by calling upon God:

**In the Name of the Father,
and of the Son, and of the
Holy Spirit, Amen.**

*We then pause for a moment to listen with
our hearts to this week's Gospel passage...*

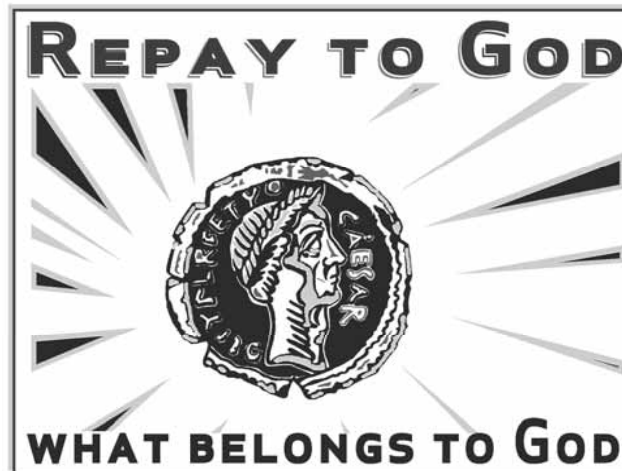
The Word of God: *Matthew 22:15-21*

The Gospel according to Matthew

The Pharisees went off and plotted how they might entrap Jesus in speech. 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. Tell us, then, what is your opinion: Is it lawful to pay the census tax to Caesar or not?"

Knowing their malice, Jesus said, "Why are you testing me, you hypocrites? Show me the coin that pays the census tax." Then **they handed him a Roman coin**. He said to them, "**Whose image** is this and whose inscription?" 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



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Gospel Glossary

Herodians: The supporters of Herod Antipas, the Tetrarch of Galilee. These people would have supported paying the tax, while the Pharisees would have opposed it.

"They handed him a Roman coin": The Pharisees' readiness to produce the coin shows their hypocrisy. In spite of their opposition to the tax and their objection to the coin's portrayal of the human form, the Pharisees nonetheless had and used Roman currency.

Whose image: The Pharisees believed that portraying the human form (using a "graven image") was a type of idolatry, and thus opposed the Roman practice of portraying the Emperor on coins.

**"Show me
the coin that
pays the
census tax."**



Faith Sharing

Questions of the Week

- What do I have that belongs to God?
- How can I "repay" God for what is his?
- Is "what belongs to God" more important in my life than "what belongs to Caesar"? Do my words and actions show it?

Closing Prayer

Lord our God, Father of all,
You guard us under the shadow
of your wings and search into the
depths of our hearts. Remove the
blindness that cannot know you
and relieve the fear that would hide
us from your sight. We ask this
through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

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