

October 22, 2017 29th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Give to God what is God's!

Isaiah 45:1,4-6

Psalms 96:1,3-5,7-10

1 Thess 1:1-5b

Matthew 22: 15-21

In the first reading *Cyrus*, an anointed one, is called by name by the Lord and is given a title and the power to even subdue nations. The people will know that it is the Lord who arms him, and there is no one who can intervene. The Lord God is unique and all powerful and the people will come to recognize there is no other.

The psalmist praises the Lord who is awesome because he created the heavens, and made the earth firm. The gods of all other nations are brought to naught so we are to give him glory and worship. The Lord is a mighty king and governs his people in equity and when those of the earth realize his wondrous deeds they will tremble.

In the second reading Paul thanks God for the faithful Thessalonian community and keeps them in his prayers for they have acted with works of faith and labored in love. They understood the gospel was more than mere words because it contains the power of the Holy Spirit.

In the Gospel Jesus is recognized as a truthful man by the Pharisees but they kept testing him in a variety of ways. Jesus, in turn, recognized their intentions and made their hypocrisy clear. Should the census tax be paid, they asked him? No problem, he responds, but make sure that you render to God what belongs to God.



The Father gives life to all, no exceptions;

The Son emphasizes this;

The Holy Spirit reminds us that we are to first see that we deserve to be givers.

What are we more prone to do? Give to Caesar what is Caesar's or render to God what is God's? Caesar represents a government with its IRS that always demands a quick and proper response or else. God, on the other hand, relies on our good will, our generosity, our love of neighbor, virtues that will prompt us to respond in helping others. Some people hesitate to be generous as they are not sure if the people on the receiving end will be deserving. Imagine if God took that point of view! In these days of catastrophes quietly find a worthwhile cause and help as you can and pray to God that you are deserving to give to others rather than being concerned about their worthiness.

If Jesus came down to earth today would he find that we understand the difference in giving to Caesar and giving to God. To Jesus the issue involves simple common sense and yet there are many obstacles to common sense and clinging to old ways when we see change is necessary is one of them. What is new will usually appear threatening and the Pharisees looked at Jesus that way even though they recognized him as a man of truth. We are moving to an unimaginable future; everything is changing but common sense enables us to appreciate what is old and good and yet discern what is new and also good.

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