

REFLECTION



The saying about rendering to Caesar and to God is often quoted in election years. We may become so accustomed to hearing about it in modern political contexts that we miss the religious challenge of the biblical text.

The saying comes at the end of a debate in which the Pharisees and the Herodians together confront Jesus. This is not a friendly conversation, since the opponents want to trap Jesus and get him into trouble. The debate is about paying the census tax, which was a tax imposed on Jews as a sign of their subjugation to Rome. Jewish political insurgents (like the Zealots) bitterly resented it. Jewish supporters of the Herod family complied with it and probably embraced it. The Pharisees resented it but went along with it. If Jesus says, “Pay the tax,” the insurgents and their supporters will turn against him. If he says, “Don’t pay the tax,” the Herodians and their allies will report him to the Roman officials, who will in turn arrest him as a revolutionary. The strategy of both groups is to lead Jesus into a trap.

Jesus’ basic advice seems to be, “Pay the tax.” His reasoning is that, like it or not, Jews had already become a part of the Roman Empire, were integrated into Caesar’s system and were using coins marked with Caesar’s image and name. Those who use Caesar’s coins can hardly object to paying Caesar’s tax. But the real emphasis in Jesus’ saying comes in the last few words, “Repay to God what belongs to God.” With these words Jesus changes the subject and moves the debate into a different realm. Now the subject is carrying out one’s obligations to God. The point is this: If you are so concerned and careful about paying taxes to the state, how much more concerned and careful should you be about the service of God and our obligations to God as our creator and lord.

The biblical writers were mainly concerned with the origin and purpose of political power, not with political structures or policies. They regarded political power as coming from God and as something to be used for the common good. In Romans 13 Paul paints an ideal picture of the Roman Empire and urges the Christians in Rome to be good citizens, to cooperate with the imperial officials and to pay their taxes. In the book of Revelation, however, John vehemently criticizes the Roman Empire, because apparently some of its local officials in Asia Minor (present-day Turkey) were forcing Christians to worship the emperor as a god. Jesus’ attitude of prudent ambiguity seems to fit somewhere between these two extreme views. In the biblical tradition illustrated by Psalm 96, “the Lord is king.” This is one of several psalms that were very likely composed for ancient Israel’s annual celebration of the kingship of God. It summons all Israel, all the nations and all creation to acknowledge and praise God as king of the universe. The psalm celebrates God as the origin of all royal and political power.

REFLECTION (cont.)

The books of the Bible were composed in a world in which human kingship was an almost universal political reality. Among the most powerful and successful rulers in antiquity was the Persian king known as Cyrus the Great. It was Cyrus who conquered Babylon in the sixth century B.C. and allowed the Jewish exiles there to return home and rebuild their temple. Today’s reading from Isaiah 45 claims that Cyrus was God’s instrument (though an unwitting one) in freeing Israel’s leaders from captivity. The prophet goes so far as to call Cyrus God’s “anointed” (or Messiah) and thus traces Cyrus’ power to the God of Israel.

In greeting the Thessalonians, Paul refers to Jesus as “the Lord Jesus Christ.” Each element in that title had a political overtone. The Roman emperor was called “lord”; the name “Jesus” means “savior” and evoked memories of the biblical Joshua; and “Christ” is the Greek equivalent of the Hebrew word for messiah, which alluded to the reign of the biblical David and the hopes for one of his descendants. The point is that just 20 years after Jesus’ execution by the Romans, he was being celebrated as one who shares divine power with God the Father. The opening of Paul’s letter features the great triad of theological virtues—faith, love and hope. They have God as their origin and object and provide a framework not only for Paul’s earliest extant letter but also for Christian life as a whole. They can guide us in our efforts to render to God what is God’s.

—America Magazine, October 2008

SECOND COLLECTION



Just as our young church here in the United States received support in the 19th century from the Catholics of Europe through the Society for the Propagation of the Faith, so too the growing churches in the Developing World today also require financial help.

Your generosity today will help make a faith-filled difference around the world!

- A gift of \$25 would be a month’s support for a young woman preparing to serve as a Religious Sister in Mali
- A gift of \$60 is a month’s education for a seminarian in Nigeria
- About \$50 a month helps a local Religious Community of Sisters in Thailand care for girls in need
- Just \$20 helps toward the purchase of a bicycle for a catechist in Kenya.



ANNOUNCEMENTS

Lifeline Ministry - Losing a job, the loss of a loved one or family struggles can be overwhelming for many of us. Sometimes talking about our difficulties can ease our troubles and help us move beyond our pain or relieve our stress. We at the Lifeline Ministry can help you during this difficult time. We offer one-on-one confidential meetings with you which are a free service offered through the Parish. Please contact the Lifeline Ministry at (707) 447-2354.



SAVE THE DATE - Friday, January 23rd - 13th Annual Crab Feed - 7:00 PM in the Parish Center. We are looking for parishioners to step forward and chair and/or help with this annual event. Please contact the Parish Office if you are interested at 447-2354.

Autumn Scripture Series - Pathways Through the Parables - Christ the King Retreat Center in Citrus Heights will host the following sessions:

- Tuesday, October 21th - Parables of Judgment, Grace & Mercy (friendship and fidelity, treasures and truth, Pharisees and non-Pharisees)
- Tuesday, October 28th - Parables of Work (harvesting, vineyard laborers, shepherds and stewards)
- Tuesday, November 4th - Parables of Feasts and Celebrations (weddings, banquets, tables, places, brides and bridegrooms)

Each session will be from 7-9 PM in La Casa. Cost is \$10 per session (seniors \$8) For more information on this program call Christ the King Passionist Retreat Center at (916) 725-4720.



All Saints Day Mass will be at 8:15 AM on Saturday, November 1st. Please note that All Saints Day falls on Saturday and the obligation is subsumed to Sunday.

CATHOLIC EDUCATION

St. Patrick-St. Vincent High School Open House - Sunday, October 26th from 1:00-3:30 PM, 1500 Benicia Road, Vallejo - Campus tours, academic presentation, athletic information, classroom demonstrations, club activities and more. Come interact with faculty, coaches, parents and students. For more information, please contact the Admissions Office at (707) 644-4425.

FOOD LOCKER THANKS



St. Mary's Food Locker would like to thank St. Joseph parishioners for the 714 canned and packaged food items donated last weekend. The next food drive will be the weekend of November 8-9.

YOUTH MINISTRY

Love in Hand 7th Annual Solano Deanery Youth Rally - This is the last

weekend to register for the Youth Rally on November 8th at St. Basil's. Be a part of the Youth Group and represent St. Joseph for Our Very First Youth Rally Event!

Teens from 7th grade through college are invited to attend. A full day of worship, praise, music and speakers, so don't miss out! The Cost is \$30 which includes lunch, dinner, and a t-shirt. Monetary donations, snacks, drinks, and water donations are greatly appreciated. For more information contact Josephine Mislant at 447-2354, ext. 33.

Youth Group Fundraiser - Donut Sale this weekend and next after 8:30, 10:00 and 12:00 Noon Masses. Please help assist the youths by supporting them in their fundraising efforts. Money raised will pay for supplies to run our program, and help pay for the Youth Rally. Your generous support and donations are greatly appreciated.

READINGS FOR THE WEEK

Mon. Eph 2:1-10; Ps 100:1-5; Lk 12:13-21
 Tues. Eph 2:12-22; Ps 85:9-14; Lk 12:35-38
 Wed. Eph 3:2-12; (Ps) Is 12:2-3, 4-6; Lk 12:39-48
 Thurs. Eph 3:14-21; Ps 33:1-2, 4-5, 11-12, 18-19; Lk 12:49-53
 Fri. Eph 4:1-6; Ps 24:1-4, 5-6; Lk 12:54-59
 Sat. Eph 4:7-16; Ps 122:1-5; Lk 13:1-9
 Sun. Ex 22:20-26; Ps 18:2-4; 1 Thes 1:5-10; Mt 22:34-40

MASS INTENTIONS

Mon. 7:00 AM-----Josie Gomez, R.I.P.
 Tues. 7:00 AM ----- Asuncion Largo, R.I.P.
 Wed. 8:15 AM----- Int. of Corzaon Sumagang
 Thurs. 7:00 AM----- Gabrielle Brancato, R.I.P.
 Fri. 7:00 AM ----- George Ivanco, R.I.P.
 Sat. 8:15 AM ----- Recaredo P. Berbano, R.I.P.
 Sat. 5:00 PM -----Mauricio & Rosalina Estares, R.I.P.
 Sun. 7:00 AM ----- Members of the Parish
 Sun. 8:30 AM -----Sick Members of the Parish
 Sun. 10:00 AM-----Peace
 Sun. 12:00 PM-----Vocations to the Priesthood