



Preparing for the Mass of Sunday 18th October 2026

The 29th Sunday in Ordinary Time — Matthew 22:15-21

Relax

Make the Sign of the Cross † and remain still for a minute of settling silence. Then read the Gospel — preferably aloud and slowly — paying attention to any words that stand out to you.



Read

This Sunday's Gospel : GIVING GOD HIS DUE



The Pharisees went away to work out between them how to trap Jesus in what he said. And they sent their disciples to him, together with the Herodians, to say, 'Master, we know that you are an honest man and teach the way of God in an honest way, and that you are not afraid of anyone, because a man's rank means nothing to you. Tell us your opinion, then. Is it permissible to pay taxes to Caesar or not?' But Jesus was aware of their malice and replied, 'You hypocrites! Why do you set this trap for me? Let me see the money you pay the tax with.' They handed him a denarius, and he said, 'Whose head is this? Whose name?' 'Caesar's,' they replied. He then said to them, 'Very well, give back to Caesar what belongs to Caesar - and to God what belongs to God.'

Did any words or phrases stand out to you in the Gospel? If so, take a few moments to meditate on them.

Reflect

Now read the Gospel again and consider what the Lord might be saying to you, or asking of you, through it. Then continue by reading Fr Henry Wansbrough's reflection...



They must really have thought they had their victim sewn up! If Jesus said he paid the Roman taxes, he recognised the Emperor, not God, as his Lord. If he said he didn't pay, he was a traitor to Rome. Jesus turns the question back on them. First he makes them admit that they themselves recognise Rome as overlord by carrying a Roman coin, for the coin would carry the Emperor's head. Next he puts them a question: what do they consider is due to Caesar? Finally he goes beyond their question, to interrogate their ultimate loyalty: in the last analysis, just what is due to God? At a superficial level this seems a little verbal tussle, in which Jesus outwits his opponents. But the story was remembered and passed on in the Christian community not because of Jesus' cleverness, but because at a deeper level it is a question which Jesus puts to each of us: just where do our loyalties and priorities lie? Money? Respect? Sex? Fame? A good holiday? Comfort? Power? Jesus is not a dictator who imposes his will. He just asks the question and leaves us to give our own answer. To those who question him he gives no easy response, but always replies with another question.

What takes priority in my life? Does God get a look-in? In what way?

Dom Henry Wansbrough OSB

Rest

Now call to mind the Lord's love for you, remembering that through this scripture the Lord is truly present. Then silently and prayerfully listen for God's voice and rest in God's love.



Respond & Request

Thank God for any insight you may have received, and respond by asking the Holy Spirit to bless you with a spiritual gift or help you to grow in a particular fruit of the Spirit. You might pray for wisdom, courage, faithfulness, self-control, patience, generosity, joy, kindness, love, peace, faith, chastity - or another grace - to help you live out your faith this week.



Remember

This Wednesday's word for our families is **GRATITUDE**
(To see the Family Version, please visit: wednesdayword.org)



As you pray for your loved ones, please remember to pray for the Church and for the families connected to our schools.

St Joseph, Patron Saint of Families and Protector of the Church, pray for us. Mary, Star of Evangelisation, pray for us. Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit; as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.



1st Reading: *Cyrus, King of Persia, Chosen by God*



Isaiah 45:1. 4-6

Thus says the Lord to his anointed, to Cyrus, whom he has taken by his right hand to subdue nations before him and strip the loins of kings, to force gateways before him that their gates be closed no more. 'It is for the sake of my servant Jacob, of Israel my chosen one, that I have called you by your name, conferring a title though you do not know me. I am the Lord, unrivalled; there is no other God besides me. Though you do not know me, I arm you that men may know from the rising to the setting of the sun that, apart from me, all is nothing.'

This passage of Isaiah must have been written at the very end of the exile in Babylon (586-538 BC), as Cyrus, King of Persia, was approaching to take over that city and decree that the captives, Jews and other nations, should be sent home to their own countries.

Because of this, the Jews saw Cyrus as God's own envoy. It must have finally confirmed them in their new understanding, reached by being sunk into the hostile and alien civilisation of Babylon, that their God, the Lord, was God not just of Israel but of the whole world. Before the exile, of course, they were convinced that the Lord was their own special God and protector, but what of other nations? Confronted with the alien and materialistic gods of Babylon, they realised that God, their own intimate and loving Lord, was the God not just of Israel but of the whole world, the whole universe, the creator of light and darkness. If no other lesson was learnt from the exile, this was a major advance in understanding of God and his ways.

Do we have other gods which we worship? Do we accept the Lord as key to every door in the universe, even the door of our own hearts?



2nd Reading: *Paul Greet the Church in Thessalonika*



1 Thessalonians 1:1-5

From Paul, Silvanus and Timothy, to the Church in Thessalonika which is in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ; wishing you grace and peace from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. We always mention you in our prayers and thank God for you all, and constantly remember before God our Father how you have shown your faith in action, worked for love and persevered through hope, in our Lord Jesus Christ. We know, brothers, that God loves you and that you have been chosen, because when we brought the Good News to you, it came to you not only as words, but as power and as the Holy Spirit and as utter conviction.

This Sunday we start reading First Thessalonians, the earliest of all Paul's letters. It is read for the next five Sundays. Paul moved so rapidly round the new Christian communities which he established that he could never instruct them fully when they were first founded:

indeed there is always more to learn about our faith. So Paul needed to keep in touch, answering questions, solving difficulties, showing his 'concern for all the Churches'. Paul's 'letters' are real letters, each responding to a different set of circumstances. Each of them begins with a warm greeting, 'grace and peace'. 'Grace' is God's affectionate and powerful smile, drawing us into God's loving protection, and empowering us to live and work for him. Then, with his thoughtful courtesy, Paul encourages the community with praise for their achievements in Christ (where possible - the Galatians get no compliments, for they have let Paul down badly). In this letter he praises the faith of the Thessalonians, their love and their firm hope, and also the effectiveness in their lives of the power of the Spirit. It never does any harm to look for the best in people, and show that their efforts have been recognised!

How do you show your faith in action and work for love?

“ There is always more to ”
learn about our faith.