

Our Faith on Sunday

GOSPEL REFLECTION



Today, those words seem more relevant than ever. In a highly secularised society worldly power (symbolised by "Caesar" in the gospel reading) seeks to assume control over the

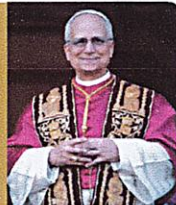
the form of a counter-cultural lifestyle choice. Yes, we pay our taxes but our first duty is to God. We take as our guiding principle in life the words of Jesus to "seek first the kingdom of God" (Mt. 6,33). We plan our Sundays around going to mass rather than a trip to the shopping mall. Above all, we allow our lives to be transformed by the message of Jesus about love of neighbour, love of our enemies, love for one another.

In the episode of the Pharisees leading Jesus into a trap by asking him about paying taxes to Caesar, it seems likely that they did not even remotely expect the answer they received. In fact, the words of Jesus go beyond the historical context in which they were uttered and give voice to resolving a universal tension that exists between politics and religion.

whole of existence. It gives nothing to God because God has been either forgotten, ignored, or denied. Just think of all the time, energy, money, and human ingenuity that is being devoted to the development of artificial intelligence. As Christians we are inevitably caught up in this secular project, but at the same time we are being called to make a stand in



POPE LEO XIV THE HOLY SEE APOSTOLIC EXHORTATIONS



THE CHOICE OF THE POOR

16. God is merciful love, and his plan of love, which unfolds and is fulfilled in history, is above all his descent and coming among us to free us from slavery, fear, sin and the power of death. Addressing their human condition with a merciful gaze and a heart full of love, he turned to his creatures and thus took care of their poverty. Precisely in order to share the limitations and fragility of our human nature, he himself became poor and was born in the flesh like us. We came to know him in the smallness of a child laid in a manger and in the extreme humiliation of the cross, where he shared our radical poverty, which is death. It is easy to understand, then, why we can also speak theologically of a preferential option on the part of God for the poor, an expression that arose in the context of the Latin American continent and in particular in the Puebla Assembly, but which has been well integrated into subsequent teachings of the Church. [12] This "preference" never indicates exclusivity or discrimination towards other groups, which would be impossible for God. It is meant to emphasize God's actions, which are moved by compassion toward the poverty and weakness of all humanity. Wanting to inaugurate a kingdom of justice, fraternity and solidarity, God has a special place in his heart for those who are discriminated against and oppressed, and he asks us, his Church, to make a decisive and radical choice in favor of the weakest.

12, Cf. John Paul II, Catechesis (27 October 1999): L'Osservatore Romano, 28 October 1999, 4.

St. Alphonsus de Liguori Uniformity with God's Will

If we would completely rejoice the heart of God, let us strive in all things to conform ourselves to his divine will. Conformity signifies that we join our wills to the will of God. Uniformity means more -- it means that we make one will of God's will and ours, so that we will only what God wills; that God's will alone, is our will. This is the summit of perfection and to it we should always aspire; this should be the goal of all our works, desires, meditations and prayers. To this end we should always invoke the aid of our holy patrons, our guardian angels, and above all, of our mother Mary, the most perfect of all the saints because she most perfectly embraced the divine will. The essence of perfection is to embrace the will of God in all things, prosperous or adverse. In prosperity, even sinners find it easy to unite themselves to the divine will; but it takes saints to unite themselves to God's will when things go wrong and are painful to self love. Our conduct in such instances is the measure of our love of God.



ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

Cf. Ps 16: 6, 8

To you I call for you will surely heed me, O God;
 turn your ear to me; hear my words.
 Guard me as the apple of your eye;
 in the shadow of your wings protect me.

COLLECT

Almighty ever-living God,
 grant that we may always conform our will to yours
 and serve your majesty in sincerity of heart.
 Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
 who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the
 Holy Spirit,
 God, for ever and ever.
Amen.

FIRST READING

A reading from the Prophet Isaiah.

Isaiah 45:1, 4-6

Thus says the LORD to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have grasped, to subdue nations before him and to loose the belts of kings, to open doors before him that gates may not be closed:

'For the sake of my servant Jacob, and Israel my chosen, I call you by your name, I name you, though you do not know me. I am the LORD, and there is no other, besides me there is no God; I equip you, though you do not know me, that people may know, from the rising of the sun and from the west, that there is none besides me; I am the LORD, and there is no other.'

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.**PSALM**

Psalm 96(95):1, 3. 4-5. 7-8. 9-10a, c. R.7b

R. Ascribe to the LORD glory and power.

O sing a new song to the LORD;
 sing to the LORD, all the earth.
 Tell among the nations his glory,
 and his wonders among all the peoples.

For the LORD is great and highly to be praised,
 to be feared above all gods.
 For the gods of the nations are naught.
 It was the LORD who made the heavens.

Ascribe to the LORD, you families of peoples,
 ascribe to the LORD glory and power;
 ascribe to the LORD the glory of his name.
 Bring an offering and enter his courts.

Worship the LORD in holy splendour.
 O tremble before him, all the earth.
 Say to the nations, 'The LORD is king.'
 He will judge the peoples in fairness.

SECOND READING

A reading from the First Letter of Saint Paul to the Thessalonians.

1 Thessalonians 1:1-5b

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

We give thanks to God always for all of you, constantly mentioning you in our prayers, remembering before our God and Father your work of faith and labour of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ. For we know, brothers and sisters loved by God, that he has chosen you, because our gospel came to you not only in word, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.**ACCLAMATION BEFORE THE GOSPEL****Alleluia, alleluia.**

Philippians 2:15d, 16a

**Shine as lights in the world,
 holding fast to the word of life.
 Alleluia.**

GOSPEL

Matthew 22:15-21

The Lord be with you.

And with your spirit.

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew.

Glory to you, O Lord.

At that time: The Pharisees went and plotted how to entangle Jesus in his words. And they sent their disciples to him, along with the Herodians, saying, 'Teacher, we know that you are true and teach the way of God truthfully, and you do not care about anyone's opinion, for you are not swayed by appearances. Tell us, then, what you think. Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar, or not?' But Jesus, aware of their malice, said, 'Why put me to the test, you hypocrites? Show me the coin for the tax.' And they brought him a denarius. And Jesus said to them, 'Whose likeness and inscription is this?' They said, 'Caesar's.' Then he said to them, 'Therefore render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's.'

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**R. PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS**

Grant us, Lord, we pray,
 a sincere respect for your gifts,
 that, through the purifying action of your grace,
 we may be cleansed by the very mysteries we serve.
 Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

Cf. Ps 32: 18-19

**R. Behold, the eyes of the Lord
 are on those who fear him,
 who hope in his merciful love,
 to rescue their souls from death,
 to keep them alive in famine.**

R.**PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

Grant, O Lord, we pray,
 that, benefiting from participation in heavenly things,
 we may be helped by what you give in this present age
 and prepared for the gifts that are eternal.
 Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.