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PETITION & THANKSGIVING LETTERS

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## A Coin Has Two Sides.

In the Gospels, the Pharisees are often seen confronting Jesus. They were laymen who were educated in the Law of Moses. They knew the Commandments very well. For them everything was done strictly and scrupulously according to the letter of the Law. They used fear and guilt to make the people obey the smallest detail of the Law. Whereas Jesus, while upholding the Law (and the Prophets) went to the heart of the Law. For Jesus the Law was meant to guide us and help us live in a free and faithful relationship with God and one another.

In today's Gospel, we see how the Pharisees try to trap Jesus over the question of paying taxes to Caesar. They recruit the services of another group called the Herodians. The latter were supporters of Rome and of Herod, who was Rome's puppet. Being educated and powerful, these two groups wanted to get rid of Jesus. So, they posed that barbed question to Jesus: Is it permissible to pay taxes to Caesar or not? If Jesus answered "yes", the local people would turn against him and see him as a traitor. If he said "no", then the Romans would get him for treason. What did Jesus do? He asked them for a coin - the money that they would use to pay their taxes. If the Pharisees were educated and the Herodians were powerful, Jesus was wise and astute. They handed him a denarius (a Roman coin) that they should not even be handling if they were truly law-abiding and loyal citizens of Jerusalem. The coin has two sides. One side carried the image of Tiberius the Emperor.

On the other side were the words: "The Divine One - The Greatest Priest". For a Jewish person to carry such a coin was blasphemy because the first Commandment stated: "The Lord is God alone; you shall not have other gods before me." The Pharisees and the Herodians fell in the trap they themselves had set up for Jesus.

Then, Jesus gives his most famous one-liner: Give back to Caesar what belongs to Caesar - and to God what belongs to God. In this reply, Jesus places everything in its right and proper relationship with God. To be a good citizen and to serve God are not in contradiction. Give each its due. God works through human persons, human systems, human institutions, and human structures for the good of people. Just as God could work through Cyrus the Great of Persia to free the people of Israel from exile. Paying taxes and giving back to Caesar may not be what we like, but it is needed for the purpose of good government - to have a safe and efficient infrastructure and to ensure that adequate services in health and education and welfare are provided for everyone in society. Then, we must not forget to give to God all that belongs to God. Think of Genesis and Creation: God created us in God's own image. We are all imprinted with the image of God. We are God's coins in the world and we are, therefore, obliged to give God all that is due to God - our hearts, our minds, our wills, our love. True Christians are at one and the same time good citizens of our countries. The coin of life and faith that we hold in our hands has two sides: we give our selfless service to our country and our neighbour, and we give our life, our love and worship to God alone.

**Reflection by Clement Lee, CSsR**

# Novena notes



29<sup>th</sup> Ordinary Sunday  
Year A

22 October 2017

## Readings & Responses for the Week

Sun, 22 October	Is 45:1-4-6; 1 Th 1:1-5; Mt 22:15-1 Give the Lord glory and power.
Mon, 23 October St John of Capestrano, Priest	Rom 4:20-25; Lk 12:13-21 Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel! He has visited his people.
Tue, 24 October St Anthony Mary Claret, Bishop	Rom 5:12,15,17-21; Lk 12:35-38 Here I am, Lord! I come to do your will.
Wed, 25 October	Rom 6:12-18; Lk 12:39-48 Our help is in the name of the Lord.
Thu, 26 October	Rom 6:19-23; Lk 12:49-53 Happy the man who has placed his trust in the Lord.
Fri, 27 October	Rom 7:18-25; Lk 12:54-59 Lord, teach me your statutes.
Sat, 28 October SS. Simon and Jude, Apostles	Eph 2:19-22; Lk 6:12-19 Their word goes forth through all the earth.

WEEKDAY MASS (MON - FRI)

Time: 6.30am, 12.15pm, 6.30pm

Confession: Half an hour before Mass

SUNSET MASS (SAT)

Time: 6.30pm

SUNDAY MASS

Time: 8am, 10am, 12noon, 5.30pm

PUBLIC HOLIDAY

Time: 8am, 6.30pm

SATURDAY MORNING MASS

Time: 7am

SATURDAY NOVENA DEVOTION

English: 8am, 9.30am, 11am, 1pm, 4pm,  
5.30pm

Mandarin: 2.30pm

Confession: After every Novena Service  
except after the 11am service.

DAYS OF OBLIGATION

Time: 7pm (Eve of Day of Obligation)  
6.30am, 12.15pm, 7pm