

Oct 22, 2017

TWENTY-NINTH
SUNDAY
IN ORDINARY TIME
YEAR A

PRAYER OF THE DAY:

Lord, by your free gift
you have chosen us
to believe in you.
Increase our believing
and show us how to make
your name great in the world.
Everywhere, people search
for truth and for love;
may they find them in us,
in all that we do
and in all that we say.
We believe
that you listen to our prayer
through Jesus, your Son,
who lives with you,
forever and ever.

FOCUS OF THE READINGS:

Both of our readings focus on the uniqueness of God: there is only one God!

The reading from *Isaiah*, apart from stating this reality again and again, makes its point through the pagan Cyrus. Though he is pagan, he too was named by God. There are no pagan Gods; there is only one God who acts in and through all!

The Gospel makes the distinction between Caesar, thought to be a god, and God, the only true God. The question behind "should we pay taxes to Caesar?" is really, "should we honor him?" Jesus chooses to distinguish between the state and God. The state has its rightful place (of which taxes are a part) but there is only one God—and it's not Caesar!

FIRST READING: *Isaiah 45:1, 4-6*

This is a reading from the prophet Isaiah.

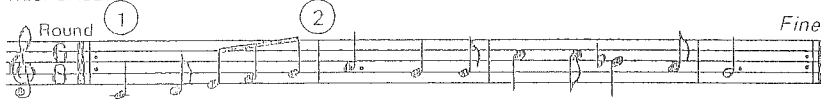
This is what God says to Cyrus, King of Persia,

“Because I love my chosen people of Israel,
I have called you by your name.
I give you a title of honor,
even though you do not know me.
I am God,
and there is no other God besides me.
I am the only God.
Even though you do not know me,
I give you strength.
I do this so that people everywhere
will know that there is no other God but me.”

The Word of the Lord.

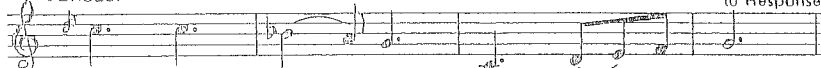
RESPONSE: *Psalm 96*

RESPONSE:



All the na-tions will praise you, and know that you are God.

VERSES:



- | | | | | | | | |
|----|-----------|-----------------|------------|----------|-----------------|--------|---------|
| 1. | Give | God | glo - ry. | Give | hon - or | and | praise. |
| 2. | Pro-claim | sal - va - tion | day | af - ter | day. | | |
| 3. | Tell | the | na - tions | God's | won - der - ful | deeds. | |

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION:



GOSPEL: *Matthew 22:15-21*

This is a reading from the Gospel of Matthew.

Some Jewish leaders, called Pharisees,
wanted to trick Jesus
into saying something wrong.
So they went to him and said,

"Teacher, we know that you are honest
and that you always teach the truth about God.
We know that you are not afraid
of what other people will say about you.
You treat everyone the same.
So tell us what you think about this:
should we pay taxes to Caesar or not?"

Jesus knew they were trying to trick him,
so he said,

"You phonies!
Why are you trying to trick me?
Show me the money you use
to pay your taxes."

Jesus looked at it and said,

"Whose picture is on this money,
and whose name?"

They answered,

"Caesar's."

So Jesus said,

"Well then, give to Caesar
what belongs to Caesar.
And give to God what belongs to God."

The Gospel of the Lord.

REFLECTING ON THE READINGS WITH CHILDREN:

You may need to explain a little of the background to today's Gospel reading. This should be kept simple not only because of their age, but also because our interest here is not in the historical political situation of the time. It will be helpful if the children know that the Jewish people lived in the Roman Empire. The leader of the empire was Caesar. The Romans believed that Caesar was a god. They worshipped him. His picture was on their money. Explain to them that this is true in many countries today as well. You might show them our coins and, if possible, some from other countries. Explain to them that when the Pharisees asked Jesus, "Should we pay taxes to Caesar?" they were trying to trick Jesus. If Jesus said, "Yes," they could say he worshipped Caesar. If he said, "No," they would tell Caesar Jesus told them not to pay taxes and Jesus would be put in jail.

- ◊ How did Jesus answer their question?
- ◊ What do you think he meant?

Help the children see that governments are necessary and they help us. You might explain that when their parents pay taxes, that money is used for schools, roads, helping the poor, people who have no jobs, elderly people who can't work anymore, parks, and so forth.

As Christians, we should help with those things. But the Pharisees wanted to know if Jesus would say Caesar was a god. Jesus' answer said that the government is good—but we worship only God.

- ◊ What do we give the government?
- ◊ How much must we obey the government (the laws?)
- ◊ What do we give to God?
- ◊ How must we obey God?

Note: the notion that we sometimes must choose between obedience to state or God is unreal for children. Discerning the application of civil disobedience is necessary for adults but not for children of this age.