

Today in Focus

OCTOBER 18 » TWENTY-NINTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Clearing away the obstacles



What is our heart's loyalty? In today's gospel, the Pharisees attempt to trap Jesus by asking about the obligation of paying taxes to the emperor. They know that if Jesus says that taxes should be paid, he would show loyalty to another authority over

their religious authority. But Jesus surprises them.

"Repay to God what belongs to God." But what are the things that are God's? Our hearts are made to seek and to glorify God. Our lives are God's! The path of faith is to discover what things we are giving priority to in our lives and to intentionally set God ahead of all of them. We put obstacles in our spiritual path whenever we set anything above seeking God and placing God first in our hearts.

We owe God our very hearts, first and foremost, uncluttered by other attachments. When something else comes first before God, we have placed it and ourselves as the first priority. Seeking to discover how our priorities are not first rooted in trust and gratitude for God helps to loosen their hold on us.

● KELLY BOURKE

Sunday, October 18

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

(Cf. Psalm 17 [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.

INTRODUCTORY RITES *(page 25)*

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,
one God, for ever and ever.

Amen.

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

Thus says the LORD to his anointed, Cyrus, whose right hand I grasp, subduing nations before him, and making kings run in his service, opening doors before him and leaving the gates unbarred:
For the sake of Jacob, my servant, of Israel, my chosen one, I have called you by your name, giving you a title, though you knew me not.

I am the LORD and there is
 no other,
 there is no God besides me.
 It is I who arm you, though
 you know me not,
 so that toward the rising
 and the setting of the sun
 people may know that
 there is none besides me.
 I am the LORD, there is
 no other.
 The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

(Psalm 96:1, 3, 4-5, 7-8, 9-10)

R. Give the Lord glory and honor.
 Sing to the LORD a new song;
 sing to the LORD, all you
 lands.
 Tell his glory among
 the nations;
 among all peoples, his
 wondrous deeds. **R.**
 For great is the LORD and
 highly to be praised;
 awesome is he, beyond
 all gods.

For all the gods of the
 nations are things of
 nought,
 but the LORD made the
 heavens. **R.**
 Give to the LORD, you
 families of nations,
 give to the LORD glory
 and praise;
 give to the LORD the glory
 due his name!
 Bring gifts, and enter his
 courts. **R.**
 Worship the LORD, in holy
 attire;
 tremble before him,
 all the earth;
 say among the nations:
 The LORD is king,
 he governs the peoples
 with equity. **R.**

SECOND READING

(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, remembering you in our prayers, unceasingly calling to mind your work of faith and labor of love and endurance in hope of our Lord Jesus Christ, before our God and Father, knowing, brothers and sisters loved by God, how you were chosen. For our gospel did not come to you in word alone, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with much conviction. The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

ALLELUIA (*Philippians 2:15d, 16a*)

Alleluia, alleluia. Shine like lights in the world as you hold on to the word of life. **Alleluia, alleluia.**

GOSPEL (*Matthew 22:15-21*)

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew. **Glory to you, O Lord.**

The Pharisees went off and plotted how they might entrap Jesus in speech. They sent their disciples to him, with the Herodians, saying, “Teacher, we know that you are a truthful man and that you teach the way of God in accordance with the truth. And you are not concerned with anyone’s opinion, for you do not regard a person’s status. Tell us, then, what is your opinion: Is it lawful to pay the census tax to Caesar or not?” Knowing their malice, Jesus said, “Why are you testing me, you hypocrites? Show me the coin that pays the census tax.” Then they handed him the Roman coin. He said to them, “Whose image is this and whose inscription?” They replied, “Caesar’s.” At that he said to them, “Then repay to Caesar what belongs to Caesar and to God what belongs to God.”

The Gospel of the Lord.
Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

PROFESSION OF FAITH (page 28)

PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL

PREPARATION OF GIFTS (page 30)

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.

PREFACE (*Sundays in Ordinary Time,*
pages 31-32)

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

(*Cf. Psalm 33 [32]:18-19*)
 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.

OR (Mark 10:45)

The Son of Man has come to
 give his life as a ransom for
 many.

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.

BLESSING & DISMISSAL (page 54)



RESPONDING TO THE WORD

Jesus tells us to give back to God what belongs to God.

● **What will I offer back to God today?**

Jesus, I give you...

SAYING AMEN

In the Collect, we ask that God may help us conform our will to the Divine will.

● **What is God's will for me? What keeps me from following it more closely?**

Father, may thy will be done...

Living with Christ **This Week**

TWENTY-NINTH WEEK IN ORDINARY TIME

This Sunday's readings encourage us to be thankful and to pray without becoming weary. In this week's readings, Paul is thankful for his friends in the ministry and reminds the Ephesians that as members of the community they must be grace-filled and Spirit-gifted stewards of God's mysteries. In the gospels, Jesus sends his followers, urging them to be vigilant, honest, and discerning in their work for the kingdom. ●

GENERAL INTERCESSIONS

Use these intercessions with your prayers this week.

- Through our dedication to the ministry of God's word:
R: *Jesus, build us up through your love.*
- Through our stewardship of creation and its goods: **R**
- Through our efforts to live together in love: **R**
- Through the unity of faith and the mission that we share: **R**

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