

LIVING FAITH

29th SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME
OCTOBER 18, 2020



THE WORD OF GOD FOR TODAY

Matthew 22.15-21

The Question about Paying Taxes

Then the Pharisees went and plotted to entrap him in what he said. So they sent their disciples to him, along with the Herodians, saying, 'Teacher, we know that you are sincere, and teach the way of God in accordance with truth, and show deference to no one; for you do not regard people with partiality. Tell us, then, what you think. Is it lawful to pay taxes to the emperor, or not?' But Jesus, aware of their malice, said, 'Why are you putting me to the test, you hypocrites? Show me the coin used for the tax.' And they brought him a denarius. Then he said to them, 'Whose head is this, and whose title?' They answered, 'The emperor's.' Then he said to them, 'Give therefore to the emperor the things that are the emperor's, and to God the things that are God's.'

REFLECTING ON THE WORD

This Gospel is often used as the basis for a reflection upon the relationship between the Church and the state. However, that is not the intent of Matthew here. This is a story about the tension between the Pharisees and Jesus and an effort on their part to entrap him. The Pharisees and their conspirators begin by flattering Jesus: they call him teacher, sincere, truthful and one who shows no favouritism. However, they “butter him up” only to achieve their real goal of tearing him down. The issue at stake is a very controversial one: should the Jews pay the annual Roman poll tax of one denarius? The tax, when it was first implemented, met with stiff and violent resistance. It became symbolic of Roman oppression and the loss of Jewish independence and national dignity. If Jesus says yes, then he proves that he is not a faithful Jew and will alienate many members of his Jewish faith community. However, if he says no, he will be advocating breaking Roman law and could be charged with treason. Either way, it would appear to be a lose-lose scenario for Jesus. Knowing the Pharisees' deceit, Jesus walks a fine line saying that because the image of Caesar is on the coin, it belongs to him. Jewish faith taught that all of creation is of God. Thus, all that is natural and created by the hand of God, belongs to God. That which is from human power, belongs to humanity. In a particular way, the power of the emperor economically, politically and militarily belongs to humanity. Of course, all that exists, comes from God, so Jesus is actually saying that even Caesar's power could not exist without God. In other words, the only source of all that exists is God's creative hand.

If we reflect on this today, we are challenged to place ourselves and what we can do under God's inspiration. If all that is, is God's Kingdom (and we believe that to be the case) then how have we done as members, and to some extent, stewards of God's Kingdom? To the extent that we do not understand this, we have become corrupt and we damage that which we hold dearest: our relationships to family, friends, all human beings, our environment, our health and the health of the natural world. The Pharisees who themselves enjoy much power, show how they abuse their power in that they try to trap Jesus; they use their power in ways that are arrogant, exploitative and manipulative towards their own agenda. It is a timely reflection on the relationship between human power and divine power for us today!

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THE CHURCH TEACHES

We continue our exploration of Pope Francis' 3rd Encyclical, *Fratelli Tutti*



ENCYCLICAL LETTER
FRATELLI TUTTI
Of the Holy Father Francis
On fraternity and social friendship

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DARK CLOUDS OVER A CLOSED WORLD

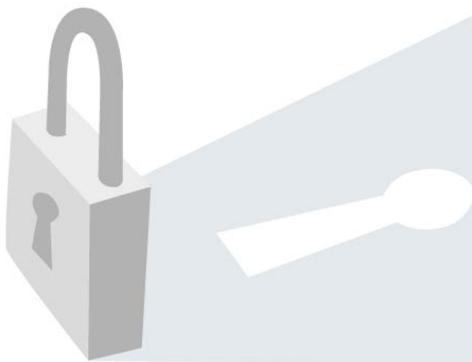


Pope Francis observes trends in our world that hinder the development of universal fraternity.

"Globalized society makes us neighbors, but it does not make us brothers and sisters."

IN WHAT WAYS DO WE OBSERVE THE DARK CLOUDS OVER A CLOSED WORLD?

- ▶ The despair and discouragement that are widespread in society
- ▶ The polarization that impedes dialogue and living together
- ▶ The persons who are considered easily "sacrificed" and discarded.
- ▶ The inequality of rights and the new forms of slavery.
- ▶ The moral deterioration and the weakening of spiritual values



TODAY WE WITNESS THE MANIPULATION OF GREAT WORDS, SUCH AS:

**LIBERTY JUSTICE
DEMOCRACY UNITY**

IN THE FACE OF THESE CHALLENGES, *FRATELLI TUTTI* INSISTS THAT

"The road we must travel is that of closeness; it is the culture of encounter"



God continues to sow abundant seeds of goodness.



Goodness, together with love, justice and solidarity, has to be realized each and every day.



Hope looks beyond any personal convenience that limits our horizon, and it opens us up to grand ideals.

WORLD MISSION SUNDAY OCTOBER 18, 2020 POPE FRANCIS' MESSAGE

For complete message, go to <https://www.missionsocieties.ca/propagation-of-the-faith-spf/world-mission-sunday/popes-message-2020/>

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

I wish to express my gratitude to God for the commitment with which the Church throughout the world carried out the Extraordinary Missionary Month last October. I am convinced that it stimulated missionary conversion in many communities on the path indicated by the theme: "Baptized and Sent: the Church of Christ on Mission in the World".

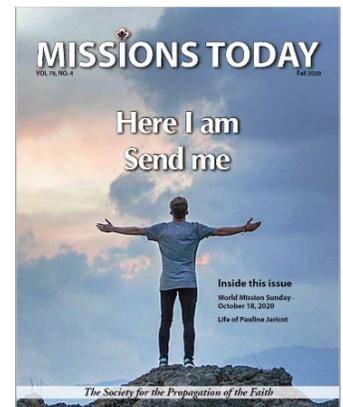
In this year marked by the suffering and challenges created by the Covid-19 pandemic, the missionary journey of the whole Church continues in light of the

words found in the account of the calling of the prophet Isaiah: "Here am I, send me" (6:8). This is the ever-new response to the Lord's question: "Whom shall I send?" (ibid.). This invitation from God's merciful heart challenges both the Church and humanity as a whole in the current world crisis. "Like the disciples in the Gospel we were caught off guard by an unexpected, turbulent storm. We have realized that we are on the same boat, all of us fragile and disoriented, but at the same time important and needed, all of us called to row together, each of us in need of comforting the other. On this boat... are all of us. Just like those disciples, who spoke anxiously with one voice, saying 'We are perishing' (v. 38), so we too have realized that we cannot go on thinking of ourselves, but only together can we do this" (Meditation in Saint Peter's Square, 27 March 2020). We are indeed frightened, disoriented and afraid. Pain and death make us experience our human frailty, but at the same time remind us of our deep desire for life and liberation from evil. In this context, the call to mission, the invitation to step out of ourselves for love of God and neighbour presents itself as an opportunity for sharing, service and intercessory prayer. The mission that God entrusts to each one of us leads us from fear and introspection to a renewed realization that we find ourselves precisely when we give ourselves to others.

"The mission, the 'Church on the move', is not a programme, an enterprise to be carried out by sheer force of will. It is Christ who makes the Church go out of herself. In the mission of evangelization, you move because the Holy Spirit pushes you, and carries you" (*Senza di Lui non possiamo fare nulla: Essere missionari oggi nel mondo. Una conversazione con Gianni Valente*, Libreria Editrice Vaticana: San Paolo, 2019, 16-17). God always loves us first and with this love comes to us and calls us. Our personal vocation comes from the fact that we are sons and daughters of God in the Church, his family, brothers and sisters in that love that Jesus has shown us. All, however, have a human dignity founded on the divine invitation to be children of God and to become, in the sacrament of Baptism and in the freedom of faith, what they have always been in the heart of God.

Mission is a free and conscious response to God's call. Yet we discern this call only when we have a personal relationship of love with Jesus present in his Church. Let us ask ourselves: are we prepared to welcome the presence of the Holy Spirit in our lives, to listen to the call to mission, whether in our life as married couples or as consecrated persons or those called to the ordained ministry, and in all the everyday events of life? Are we willing to be sent forth at any time or place to witness to our faith in God the merciful Father, to proclaim the Gospel of salvation in Jesus Christ, to share the divine life of the Holy Spirit by building up the Church? Are we, like Mary, the Mother of Jesus, ready to be completely at the service of God's will (cf. *Lk 1:38*)? This interior openness is essential if we are to say to God: "Here am I, Lord, send me" (cf. *Is 6:8*). And this, not in the abstract, but in this chapter of the life of the Church and of history.

THEME: HERE I AM,
SEND ME!



World Mission Sunday

Today is World Mission Sunday. Today, every Catholic community and parish throughout the world is involved in World Mission Sunday. It is a day that we show that all Catholics are missionary disciples who all have a role to play in the missionary activities of the Church. It is a global effort to bring spiritual and material assistance to those who long for the love of Christ. Your kind support will help new Churches to become strong and vital faith communities. Please continue to pray for those who serve in mission countries and please be generous in your support of their work. Thank you in advance for any financial support that you can provide on this World Mission Sunday.

(Sister Rosemary Ryan, Director for the Pontifical Mission Societies)

This week's Gospel Activity - Word Search

Paying Taxes to Caesar

Then he said to them, "Give to Caesar what is Caesar's, and to God what is God's." Matthew 22:21

Based on Matthew 22:15-22 (NIV)



U Q J P F L K C Z Q T A X E S
Y N W N L O V Q P J H N J Z D
Z A H R H A P C K B W K S E K
D P K E F T N I L Q E O Z H G
A H R P A R T S N P S A R A C
D A Y L Q A E K I I M A F D N
D R Y I A P A C N A O N A Y S
W I P E B O C A T S U N A L Z
F S S D L N H E E U U W V D V
Z E I C S G E S G O L E N B E
F E W W I L R A R S Z B T G L
U S T N B P T R I U Y G B I O
V F L Y H G L I T Z U O F V G
K T R U T H O E Y P U T K E H
V M V K Q X K D S O Z A D K G

GOD
CAESAR
WAY
PHARISEES

WORDS
TAXES
PLANS
TEACHER

DISCIPLES
AMAZED
GIVE
INTEGRITY

OPINION
REPLIED
TRAP
TRUTH