

OCTOBER 22, 2017



TWENTY-NINTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME



ISAIAH 45:1, 4-6

PSALM 96:1, 3, 4-5, 7-8, 9-10

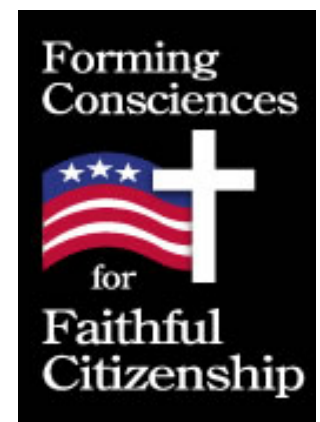
1 THESSALONIANS 1:1-5B

MATTHEW 22:15-21

REFLECTION

“Repay to Caesar what belongs to Caesar and to God what belongs to God” (Matthew 22:21). The key interpretive issue of this passage rests in the meaning of this statement. The first half on its own indicates that the tax should be paid, since the emperor’s image and inscription on the coin would cause it to fall under things that are the emperor’s. The above line from Jesus is a response to those who were trying to trap him in his words about taxation. Jesus supported the legal authority of governments to tax the citizens, and the citizens’ duty to pay their taxes.

But how can we repay to God what belongs to God? First we must start with the question: What belongs to God? For Christians, as Scripture proclaims everything belongs to God, we are the managers of property that belongs to God. Since everything belongs to Christ, we need to have the attitude and view that our things are his things, our stuff is his stuff, all we could have now, all we could have lost, all we will have, is his—including our very bodies and spiritual gifts. Property, money, relationships, talents, time, even our lives are things that belong to God. So how can we repay to God what belongs to him? Our duty as Christians is to learn to become responsible stewards of our Lord’s resources entrusted into our care. It means to manage everything to the best of our abilities, for his glory.



ACTION

Become engaged in advocating for the common good in society. Get politically involved. Start by reading the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops document, *Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship* (www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/faithful-citizenship/). Read it and reflect on your moral code and its implications for your political involvement.

JOURNALING QUESTIONS

● How can you repay to God what belongs to him in a society of competing powers? In what way can you be a responsible steward of the Lord’s resources entrusted to humanity’s care?