



## ***29<sup>th</sup> SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME*** ***YEAR A – October 22, 2017***

In the first reading, today (Isaiah 45:1-6) God speaks to a non-Jew named Cyrus. This is the only place in the Bible where a Gentile ruler is anointed by God. The kingdom of Cyrus in 6 BC spread over 2000 miles, including the territories of the Assyrian and Babylonian Empires. It was the largest kingdom of that time and Cyrus was the most powerful man in the world.

Why did God anoint him? God did that because he chose Cyrus to set his people free from their captivity in Babylon. Cyrus not only set them free but he helped them restore Jerusalem and the Temple to their former glory. He even allowed the Israelites to take the holy vessels of their synagogue with them and he expected nothing in return. 600 years before Jesus was born, Cyrus, a Gentile, “...rendered to God the things that are God’s.”

Fast forward 600 years. The question asked of Jesus in the gospel (Matthew 22:15-21) was a well fashioned trap, If Jesus said it is lawful to pay taxes, the people would hate him. If he said it is unlawful to pay taxes, the Romans would hate him. So what does Jesus do? He takes the coin and simply says, “Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s and to God the things that are God’s.”

Our Responsorial Psalm (Psalm 96:1, 3, 4-5,9-10) reminds us to “... give the Lord glory and Honor”. The most precious “thing” we can render to God giving Him glory and Honor, is the sacrifice of his own Son on the cross. It is the ultimate act of our Lord’s love for us and is commemorated at every Mass. To render it properly unto God takes some preparation and effort on our part. We need to become familiar with the Readings *before* we come to Mass. There is a message there for each of us if we know how to look with the eyes of faith. The Eucharist itself is the source and summit of our Spirituality. The Eucharist is Jesus.

When we praise God at Mass, do we mean it? When we thank God at Mass, do we mean it? When we ask for forgiveness at Mass, do we mean it? When we listen to the word of God at Mass, do we keep it? These are some of the “things” we render to God.

When we prepare the gifts at the altar, do we know why we do that? When the bread and wine are consecrated, do we remember why? When we receive communion, does it change us? When we leave the church are we better people than when we came in?

We are citizens of two worlds – the City of God and the City of Man. Jesus asks us to, “Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s and to God the things that are God’s.” Our taxes to “Caesar” can be measured in dollars and cents. The fruits of the Mass can’t be measured. They are priceless! In the presence of such awesome Divine Love, we humbly “...give the Lord Glory and Honor” as we render to God the things that are God’s.

