



The Holy See

POPE FRANCIS

ANGELUS

Saint Peter's Square
Sunday, 22 October 2017

[Multimedia]

Dear Brothers and Sisters, Good morning!

This Sunday's Gospel (Mt 22:15-21) presents to us a new face-to-face encounter between Jesus and his adversaries. The theme addressed is that of the tribute to Caesar: a "thorny" issue about whether or not it was lawful to pay taxes to the Roman Emperor, to whom Palestine was subject in Jesus' time. There were various positions. Thus, the question that the Pharisees posed to him — "Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar, or not?" (v. 17) — was meant to ensnare the Teacher. In fact, depending on how he responded, he could have been accused of being either for or against Rome.

But in this case too, Jesus responds calmly and takes advantage of the malicious question in order to teach an important lesson, rising above the polemics and the alliance of his adversaries. He tells the Pharisees: "Show me the money for the tax". They present him a coin, and, observing the coin, Jesus asks: "Whose likeness and inscription is this?". The Pharisees can only answer: "Caesar's". Then Jesus concludes: "Render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's" (cf. vv. 19-21). On the one hand, suggesting they return to the emperor what belongs to him, Jesus declares that paying tax is not an act of idolatry, but a legal obligation to the earthly authority; on the other — and it is here that Jesus presents the "thrust" of his response: recalling the primacy of God, he asks them to render to Him that which is His due as the Lord of the life and history of mankind.

The reference to Caesar's image engraved on the coin says that it is right that they feel fully —

with rights and duties — citizens of the State; but symbolically it makes them think about the other image that is imprinted on every man and woman: the image of God. He is the Lord of all, and we, who were created “in his image” belong to Him first and foremost. From the question posed to him by the Pharisees, Jesus draws a more radical and vital question for each of us, a question we can ask ourselves: *to whom do I belong?* To family, to the city, to friends, to work, to politics, to the State? Yes, of course. But first and foremost — Jesus reminds us — you belong to God. This is the fundamental belonging. It is He who has given you all that you are and have. And therefore, day by day, we can and must live our life in recognition of this fundamental belonging and in heartfelt gratitude toward our Father, who creates each one of us individually, unrepeatable, but always according to the image of his beloved Son, Jesus. It is a wondrous mystery.

Christians are called to commit themselves concretely in the human and social spheres without comparing “God” and “Caesar”; comparing God and Caesar would be a fundamentalist approach. Christians are called to commit themselves concretely in earthly realities, but illuminating them with the light that comes from God. The primary entrustment to God and hope in him do not imply an escape from reality, but rather the diligent rendering to God that which belongs to him. This is why a believer looks to the future reality, that of God, so as to live earthly life to the fullest, and to meet its challenges with courage.

May the Virgin Mary help us to always live in conformity with the image of God that we bear within us, inside, also offering our contribution to the building of the earthly city.

After the Angelus:

Dear brothers and sisters, beatified yesterday in Barcelona were Mateu Casals, Teófilo Casajús, Ferran Saperas and 106 companion Martyrs, who belonged to the religious congregation of Claretians and, during the Spanish Civil War, were killed in hatred of the faith. May their heroic example and their intercession sustain the many Christians who, even in our day, in different parts of the world, endure discrimination and persecution.

Today, World Mission Day is being celebrated on the theme ‘Mission at the heart of the Church’. I call everyone to live the joy of mission by witnessing to the Gospel in the environments in which each one lives and works. At the same time, we are called to support with love, concrete help and prayer, the missionaries who have gone to proclaim Christ to those who do not yet know him. I also mention that it is my intention to promote an *Extraordinary Missionary Month* in October 2019, with the aim of fostering ardour in the Church’s ‘ad gentes’ evangelizing activity. On the day we observe the liturgical memorial of Saint John Paul ii, the missionary Pope, let us entrust to his intercession the Church’s mission in the world.

I ask you to join me in praying for peace in the world. In these days, I am following with particular

attention Kenya, which I visited in 2015, and for which I pray so that the entire country may be able to address the current difficulties in a climate of constructive dialogue, keeping at heart the pursuit of the common good.

Now I greet all of you, pilgrims from Italy and from various countries. In particular, the faithful from Luxembourg and those from Ibiza, the Immaculate Heart of Mary Family Movement of Brazil, the Sisters of the Most Holy Mother of Sorrows. I greet and bless with affection the Peruvian community of Rome, gathered here with the sacred image of the *Señor de los Milagros*.

I greet the groups of faithful from many Italian parishes, and I encourage them to continue their journey of faith with joy.

And to all I wish a happy Sunday. Please, do not forget to pray for me. Enjoy your lunch!
Arrivederci!