

~GOSPEL MEDITATION~

ENCOURAGE DEEPER UNDERSTANDING OF SCRIPTURE

*October 18, 2026
The 29th Sunday
in
Ordinary Time*

Readings:
Isaiah 45:1,4 - 6
Psalm 96
Thessalonians 1:1 - 5b
Matthew 22:15 - 21



Occasionally, I'll slip into a parish I've never visited before, pick up the bulletin, and find one of my Gospel reflections. My heart usually swells with a bit of affection for my creation. I imprint a bit of myself into my little "literary labors of love." Anyone who has created something — a piece of writing, a garden, a meal, a child — knows that feeling. We love the things into which we put ourselves. We are happy when they return to us.

With this in mind, listen to Jesus' classic line in this Sunday's Gospel: "Then repay to Caesar what belongs to Caesar and to God what belongs to God" (Matthew 22:21). He presents this little riddle to deepen the theme from taxes to human beings. A Roman coin bears Caesar's image, so it belongs to Caesar. Therefore, he has a legitimate claim to it. Fair enough. But what belongs to God? What bears His image? Every human being. God has imprinted Himself on every person. Which means everyone — including Caesar — belongs entirely to Him. Jesus, who is God's perfect image, has come to draw everyone back to God.

We can be tempted to imagine that our lives are made up of "things for God" and "things not for God." The good news is that no such division is possible because everything in life is a gift from God to us. Therefore, all is meant to be placed at the service of God's kingdom. He loves everything He has created. We have the privilege of giving it all back to Him.

— Father John Muir

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