The Living Word

Twenty-ninth Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year A 18 October 2026

First Reading Is 45:1.4-6

I have taken the hand of Cyrus to subdue nations before his countenance.

Thus says the Lord to his anointed, to
Cyrus,
whom he has taken by his right hand
to subdue nations before him
and strip the loins of kings,
to force gateways before him
that their gates be closed no more:

It is for the sake of my servant Jacob,
of Israel my chosen one,
that I have called you by your name,
conferring a title though you do not
know me.
I am the Lord, unrivalled;
there is no other God besides me.
Though you do not know me, I arm you
that men may know from the rising to
the setting of the sun
that, apart from me, all is nothing.

Responsorial Psalm

Ps 95:1. 3-5. 7-10. R. v.7

(R.) Give the Lord glory and honour.

1 O sing a new song to the Lord,
sing to the Lord all the earth.
Tell among the nations his glory
and his wonders among all the
peoples. *(R.)*

2 The Lord is great and worthy of praise,
to be feared above all gods;
the gods of the heathens are naught.
It was the Lord who made the heavens.
(R.)

3 Give the Lord, you families of peoples,
give the Lord glory and power,
give the Lord the glory of his name.
Bring an offering and enter his courts.
(R.)

4 Worship the Lord in his temple.
O earth, tremble before him.
Proclaim to the nations: 'God is king.'
He will judge the peoples in fairness.
(R.)

Second Reading 1 Thes 1:1-5

We are mindful of your faith, hope, and love.

From Paul, Silvanus and Timothy, to the Church in Thessalonika which is in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ; wishing you grace and peace from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

We always mention you in our prayers and thank God for you all, and constantly remember before God our Father how you have shown your faith in action, worked for love and persevered through hope, in our Lord Jesus Christ.

We know, brothers, that God loves you and that you have been chosen, because when we brought the Good News to you, it came to you not only as words, but as power and as the Holy Spirit and as utter conviction.

Gospel Acclamation Phil 2:15. 16

Alleluia, alleluia!
Shine on the world like bright stars;
you are offering it the word of life.
Alleluia!

Gospel Mt 22:15-21

Give to Caesar the things that belong to Caesar and to God the things that are God's.

The Pharisees went away to work out between them how to trap Jesus in what he said. And they sent their disciples to him, together with the Herodians, to say, 'Master, we know that you are an honest man and teach the way of God in an honest way, and that you are not afraid of anyone, because a man's rank means nothing to you. Tell us your opinion, then. Is it permissible to pay taxes to Caesar or not?' But Jesus was aware of their malice and replied, 'You hypocrites! Why do you set this trap for me? Let me see the money you pay the tax with.' They handed him a denarius, and he said, 'Whose head is this? Whose name?' 'Caesar's' they replied. He then said to them, 'Very well, give back to Caesar what belongs to Caesar – and to God what belongs to God.'

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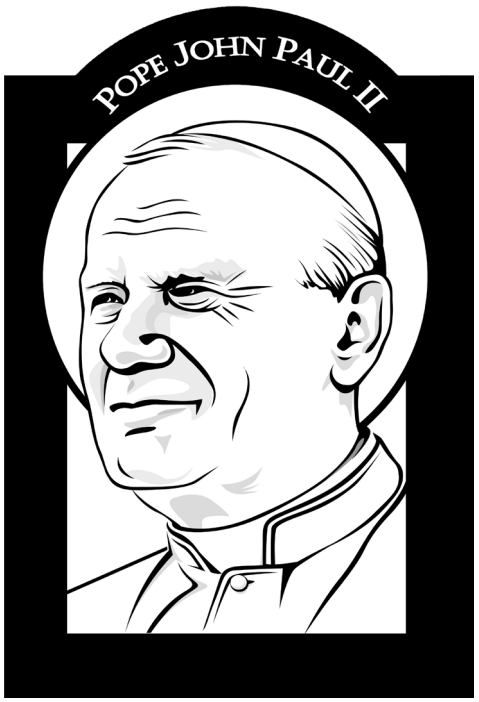
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Reflection *by Greg Sunter*

The gospel writer presents this episode as a deliberate attempt by the Pharisees to trap Jesus and turn the people against him. Their plan was a good one, with no apparent 'safe' answer: is it permissible (within Jewish tradition) to pay taxes to Caesar or not? If Jesus were to answer that it is not permissible to pay taxes then he would be identified as a rebel and a threat to Roman authority – leaving himself open to severe punishment. If he were to answer that it was permissible to pay the taxes he would have alienated a lot of his audience who resented the taxes imposed by Rome.

Instead of falling into the trap set by the Pharisees, Jesus approaches the question in a completely different way. He asks them to show him the money with which they pay the tax. Immediately, he has turned the tables on them. He doesn't appear to carry any of the coin in question and yet the Pharisees' disciples carry them as a matter of habit. They are asking if it is permissible to pay the tax and yet freely carry the coin with which the tax is paid. Jesus shows up the hypocrisy of their question by forcing them to reveal their own position in the simple action of producing one of the Roman coins. Jesus then closes the dispute by instructing them to render (give) to Caesar what belongs to Caesar but, more importantly, render to God what belongs to God. In a very simple way Jesus has shown up the Pharisees' disciples as being collaborators with the Roman authority and placing that authority above the authority of God. He reminds the listeners that regardless of earthly authority, the first duty is owed to God.



Pope Saint John Paul II *was born Karol Józef Wojtyła in 1920 in the Polish town of Wadowice. Growing up, he was keen on swimming and skiing, and at university he developed an interest in theatre and poetry. After his father's death in 1941, he decided to join the priesthood and studied at the seminary while Poland was under occupation by the Nazis. He was ordained a priest in 1946 and was appointed the Auxilary Bishop of Kraków in 1958, and later took part in Vatican II. Following the sudden death of Pope John Paul I, he was elected Pope in 1978, becoming the first non-Italian pope since 1523. He was the second longest serving pope in modern history and travelled the world extensively, visiting 129 countries during his pontificate. John Paul II is widely credited with helping to bring down Communism in Europe and he made many efforts to improve relations beween the church and other faiths including Islam and Judaism.*



Wordsearch

Try to find these words:

belongs	Pharisees	teacher
coins	respect	test
Emperor	silver	trick
honest	taxes	truth

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

Colour in the shapes that contain dots to reveal something that Jesus wants us to show others.

