

29TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME · YEAR A · WORLD MISSION SUNDAY

Theme: “Our Whole Life Belongs to God”

Isaiah 45:1, 4–6; Psalm 96; 1 Thessalonians 1:1–5b; Matthew 22:15–21.

Homily

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

Today, the Word of God invites us to reflect on a fundamental question: Who truly has first place in our lives?

We have many responsibilities. We have our families, our work, our duties, our relationships, and our responsibilities in society. All these are important. But in the midst of our busy lives, we must ask ourselves: Where is God in our daily decisions? Is He at the centre of our lives, or do we remember Him only when we need something?

In today's Gospel, Jesus gives us a beautiful and challenging answer: “Then repay to Caesar what belongs to Caesar and to God what belongs to God.”

Let us reflect on three lessons from today's readings.

1. God is the Lord of our lives

In the first reading, God speaks through the prophet Isaiah about Cyrus, a powerful ruler who would become an instrument in God's plan for His people. What is remarkable is that God can work even through a ruler who does not fully know Him. God remains present and active in human history, even when people do not recognise His presence.

Sometimes we think that God can work only through holy people, priests, religious, or those who pray every day. But God can work through many people and circumstances to accomplish His purposes.

He can work through a kind neighbour, a generous stranger, a dedicated teacher, a faithful parent, or a person who helps us during a difficult moment. We may not always understand why certain things happen in our lives. We may experience disappointments, unexpected changes, or difficult situations. Yet we are invited to trust that God has not abandoned us.

Dear friends, we do not need to understand everything before we trust God. We need to believe that He remains Lord of our lives. Let us ask ourselves: Do I allow God to guide my decisions? Do I trust Him when life does not go according to my plans?

2. Give to God what belongs to God

In the Gospel, the Pharisees try to trap Jesus with a difficult question about paying taxes to Caesar.

Jesus asks them to show Him the coin used to pay the tax. He then asks, "Whose image is this and whose inscription?"

They answer, "Caesar's."

Jesus replies, "Then repay to Caesar what belongs to Caesar and to God what belongs to God."

The coin carries Caesar's image. But we must ask a deeper question: Whose image do we carry?

The Book of Genesis teaches us that every human person is created in the image and likeness of God. Our life is a gift from Him. Our talents, our abilities, our time, and our opportunities are entrusted to us by Him.

Therefore, giving God what belongs to God means much more than placing money in the collection basket or attending Mass on Sunday.

It means giving Him our hearts.

When we speak the truth, we honour God. When we forgive someone who has hurt us, we honour God. When we care for a sick person, comfort someone who is lonely, or help a poor family, we honour God.

When we refuse to participate in dishonesty, gossip, hatred, or injustice, we show that our lives belong to Him.

Dear brothers and sisters, it is possible to come to church every Sunday and still keep God outside our daily decisions. We may pray with our lips but fail to love with our hearts.

Jesus invites us to a deeper faith: a faith that transforms the way we speak, work, forgive, serve, and treat one another. God does not ask only for a part of our time. He invites us to place our whole life in His hands.

3. Our faith must become love in action

In the second reading, St. Paul praises the Christians of Thessalonica for their “work of faith, labor of love and endurance in hope.”

These three qualities give us a practical guide for Christian living.

- First, the work of faith.

Faith is not simply believing that God exists. Faith means trusting Him and living according to His Word.

It is easy to say, “I believe in God,” when everything is going well. But genuine faith is revealed when we face difficulties, misunderstandings, illness, uncertainty, or disappointment.

Faith says, “Lord, I may not understand everything, but I trust You.”

- Second, the labour of love.

Love requires action and sacrifice. A parent who patiently cares for a child, a person who visits a lonely neighbour, a priest who accompanies someone in suffering, and a young person who helps someone in need are all expressing love through action.

We cannot separate love of God from love of our neighbour.

If we receive the Eucharist but refuse to forgive someone, we must examine our hearts. If we pray for the poor but never respond to their suffering when we can help, we must ask whether our prayer is bearing fruit.

Our love must become visible in our actions.

- Third, endurance in hope.

Christian hope does not mean that we will never face problems. It means that difficulties do not have the final word.

There may be moments when our prayers seem unanswered. There may be times when we feel tired, discouraged, or forgotten. But we continue to trust in God's faithfulness.

Dear friends, faith helps us trust God, love moves us to serve others, and hope gives us strength to continue. When these three qualities become part of our lives, we become witnesses of Christ in the world.

4. We are called to be missionary disciples

Today, the Church celebrates World Mission Sunday. This reminds us that the mission of the Church belongs to every baptised Christian. We sometimes think that mission means travelling to another country, preaching in distant villages, or working in places where people have never heard the Gospel. These

are important expressions of mission, but mission begins much closer to home. It begins in our families, our parishes, our workplaces, and our neighbourhoods.

A husband and wife who remain faithful to one another are witnesses of God's love. Parents who teach their children to pray are missionaries in their homes. Young people who choose honesty and kindness are witnesses to the Gospel. Parishioners who welcome newcomers and accompany those who feel lonely help make Christ present in their community.

We do not all have the same gifts or opportunities, but every one of us has a mission. We can pray for missionaries, support their work according to our means, encourage vocations, and personally share the joy of our faith. The world does not need Christians who merely speak about Jesus. It needs Christians whose lives help others encounter Jesus.

Let us remember: Mission begins when we allow Christ to change our own hearts and continues when we bring His love to others.

Conclusion

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

Today's Gospel leaves us with a simple but profound question:

- What are we giving to God?
- Are we giving Him only our Sunday prayers, or are we giving Him our hearts throughout the week?
- Are we offering Him only our words, or are we offering Him our actions?
- Are we keeping our faith within the walls of the church, or are we carrying the love of Christ into the world?

Let us make a sincere decision this Sunday. Let us give God our time through prayer, our hearts through love, our hands through service, and our lives through faithful discipleship.

We belong to God. Everything we have is entrusted to us by Him. May we use all that we are and all that we have for His glory and the good of our brothers and sisters.

Closing Prayer

Heavenly Father,

We thank You for the gift of our lives and for calling us to be Your children. Teach us to recognise Your presence in our daily experiences. Give us the wisdom to fulfil our responsibilities honestly and the courage to remain faithful to Your Word.

Lord Jesus, take possession of our hearts. Help us to become instruments of Your peace, witnesses of Your love, and servants of those who are poor, lonely, and forgotten.

Holy Spirit, strengthen our faith, deepen our love, and renew our hope. May our families, our parish, and our communities become places where Your goodness is visible.

Bless all missionaries who proclaim the Gospel throughout the world.

Protect them in their work and help each of us fulfil the mission You have entrusted to us.

May everything we say and do give glory to You, our loving God.

We ask this through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

FR. RICHARD ROSARIO