

October 22, 2017, 29th Sunday in Ordinary Time, Mt.22:15-21, by r.j.tusky

"Then repay to Caesar what belongs to Caesar and to God what belongs to God."

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Once upon a time---we heard certain scriptures that have always, kind of **'stuck'** with us.

(See if you can finish these quotes.)

For example: "Let there be ...light."

For example: "We are made to the image and likeness of ...God."

For example: "He built the rib he had taken from the man into a ...woman."

For example: "Lazarus, come ...out."

For example: "Let this cup ...pass from me."

For example: "Father, forgive them, for they know not ...what they do."

I could go on & on, proving that you probably know more scripture than you realize.

BUT, how about today's scripture, which I just read to you from St. Matthew's Gospel:

'Give to Caesar what is Caesar's or the things of Caesar to Caesar & the things of God to God.'

*I don't know if you ever thought about it much, **BUT** having responsibility to the State and to God, **'simultaneously,'** clarifies that we have **'dual-citizenship.'***

*We are citizens of **this** world **AND** we are citizens of **the world to come!***

*If the two worlds were to collide, we would have no way to ever justify a compromise of our allegiance to God. Of course, stalwart, **non-compromise** has happened throughout history, hence the countless martyrs ...from pious popes to penniless paupers.*

*One of the greatest martyrs, of historical import, is St. Thomas More, Chancellor of England, who gave witness of his allegiance to God (**over State**) by being beheaded by the King of England, rather than sign his agreement with the king's self-declared divorce/annulment ...to marry Ann Boleyn. Robert Bolt dramatized More's conflict in his book, **A Man for All Seasons**.*

*We recall that, in the 16th & 17th centuries, Christians fled to America, the **'New World,'** to practice their religion **without** State intervention.*

Even to this day, we experience the collision of Church and State in America, specifically, over the Right to Life. Our compromise to God/conscience is out of the question. This simple & clear tenet has brought tremendous pain & suffering to so very many. It's absolutely heartbreaking.

I close with this prayer... of Thomas Jefferson for our nation:

"Almighty God, you have given us this good land as our heritage...."

Bless our land...Save us from violence ...and every evil way.

Defend our liberties....

**Endow with the Spirit of Wisdom those to whom, in your name,
we entrust the authority of government.**

**In time of prosperity, fill our hearts with thankfulness,
and, in time of trouble,**

Do not allow our trust in you to fail."

*May our loving and all knowing God, our Abba, bless you...
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.*