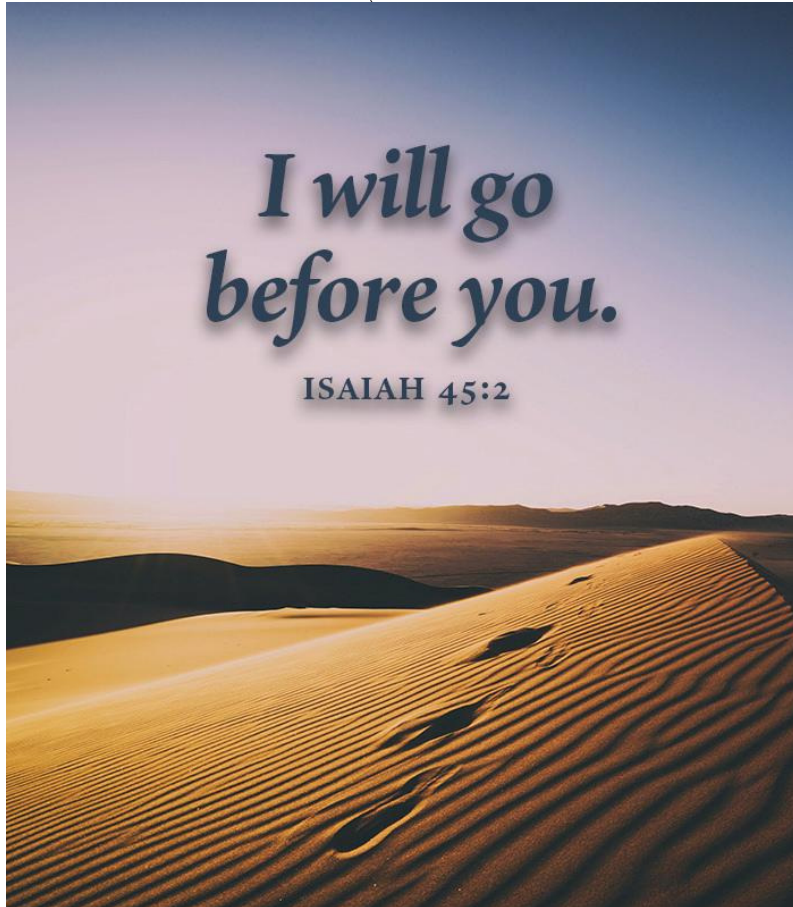


**Twentieth Sunday after Pentecost
October 18, 2020**



The Lord be with you. Let us pray...

O God, our refuge and strength, since you yourself are the author of our devotion, graciously consider the devout prayers of your Church. May those things which we ask in faith effectively follow by your grace; through Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen. (*Gelasian Sacramentary*, 7th Century)

God goes before us, just as he went before King Cyrus of old. He levels supposedly high places—even death and hell themselves—bringing salvation with glory and great strength. What would we do then, chosen and devoted disciples, but worship and become imitators of the Lord? As such, we concern ourselves with matters of his eternal kingdom instead of being preoccupied with the things of this world. God will take care of this world and its governance, just as he did with Persia, Babylon, and Israel.

*Our gospel
came to you
not only in
word, but
also in power
and in the
Holy Spirit...*

1 Thessalonians 1:5

Let us pray... Sovereign Lord, your reign extends across time and space. You have created us in your own image and redeemed us by your grace through your Son. Grant that we may return to you what is yours, our entire selves given to your mission in the world; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

God has used many earthly kings to accomplish his will. He still employs the rulers of our world so that his will is done on earth as it is in heaven (Matt 6:10). Our prayers should attend kings, presidents, and other government rulers. Though our first reading (Isaiah 45:1-7) shows that God used a king named Cyrus, he has used the King of kings to accomplish far more. The armies of Hell have been vanquished through the cross of Christ. He is the one who causes people from the east to the west to know that there is none besides the Lord who accomplishes these things.

The psalmist (Psalm 96:1-9, 10-13) tells us to declare to the nations of the glory of God. This is accomplished by offering more for missions than we do for government—in terms of money, as well as work and prayer.

“Our gospel” (1Thes 1:5), or the gospel of Christ’s Church is what ultimately impacts the world. Taxes, civic authority, and armies are of some use. Yet in the end, our trust must be placed in the gospel of Christ’s kingdom. As such, our efforts and prayers must be with those workers in the true kingdom on this earth. Through the power of the Holy Spirit, our second reading (1 Thessalonians 1:1-1) informs us, individual lives are changed—as well as nations.

*Render to
Caesar the
things that
are Caesar's,
and to God
the things
that are
God's.*

Matthew 22:21

Essentially, our gospel lesson (Matthew 22:15-22) tells us to pay our taxes and pray to God. Jesus has called us to do both, trusting the Lord with the nations. Certainly, God will use our prayers even more than our taxes but we are called to be faithful in each. This is not a matter for debate; it is a matter of obedience.



RENDER TO CAESAR
THE THINGS THAT
ARE CAESAR'S,
AND TO GOD
THE THINGS THAT
ARE GOD'S.

MATTHEW 22:15

Hypocrites Get Their Due

Find the 36 **bold** words from Matthew 22:15-22 (ESV)

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

Then the **Pharisees** went and **plotted** how to **entangle** him in his **words**. And they **sent their disciples** to him, along with the **Herodians**, saying, “**Teacher**, we **know** that you are **true** and teach the **way of God truthfully**, and you do not **care** about anyone’s **opinion**, for you are not **swayed** by **appearances**. **Tell** us, then, what you **think**. Is it **lawful** to **pay taxes** to **Caesar**, or not?” But **Jesus**, aware of their **malice**, said, “Why put me to the **test**, you **hypocrites**? Show me the **coin** for the tax.” And they brought him a **denarius**. And Jesus said to them, “Whose **likeness** and **inscription** is this?” They said, “Caesar’s.” Then he said to them, “Therefore **render** to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and to God the things that are God’s.” When they **heard** it, they **marveled**. And they left him and went away.