

Gospel Reflection for the 29th. Sunday in ordinary time

October 18th. – Caesar and God

Some once said that *the only things certain in this world are death and taxes*. And it appears from our gospel that at the time of Jesus, taxes had to be paid then also!

The Pharisees never missed a chance or opportunity to try and trap Jesus. They were always hoping that he would say or do something that would trap him and make him look foolish in front of his friends and followers.

Just because we are followers of Jesus, it does not mean we exempt from living in the real world. We go to work, earn our wages and spend our hard earned money on the things we need to stay alive. Bills have to be paid and we too today have to pay tax to keep our economy going.

People often miss quote this saying for the New Testament; *money is the root of all evil*. The correct saying in the Letter to Timothy is *the love of money is the root of evil*. There is nothing wrong with money in itself. It is how use, misuse and even abuse money that matters.

In a book called *The Little Prince*, it says *it is with the heart that one can truly see, what is essential is invincible to the eye*. In our own daily lives, we need to be aware of what we consider being essential. Is it having more money so that we can spend it on things that we want rather than need? The newspapers and the television constantly bombard us with advertisements. They offer us the message that if we buy a certain phone, drive a certain car and wear certain clothes, we will be happy, secure and fulfilled. This is not true. This is definitely fake news. The real good news is that our dignity does not come from spending money on things we don't actually need. Our dignity and value come from being created, loved and known by God. The Prophet Isaiah reminds us that we are *precious* in the eyes of God. This is good news that will last. It is not some trendy statement that will go out of fashion.

Perhaps we need to take some time this week to reflect on our daily lives to discover what is truly and deeply essential to us. According to Jesus and the gospel what is essential is love, forgiveness, peace, justice and concern for the poor. As we do this, may the words of Jesus from today's gospel stay with us; *give to Caesar what is due to Caesar and give to God what is due to God*.

• Michael Moore OMI