

IS IT LAWFUL TO PAY THE CENSUS TAX TO CAESAR OR NOT? Jesus is asked in today's Gospel. Matthew makes it clear that those who ask this question are interested in one thing only: *how they might entrap Jesus in speech*. If Jesus answered "yes," he might forfeit his popularity with the masses, who resented the payment. If he answered "no," he could be denounced to the authorities for inciting people to break the law.

Jesus does not give either of the answers his questioners were looking for. Jesus' reply, *Repay to Caesar what belongs to Caesar*, rejects the radical position of those who claimed that the Roman government was unlawful and should not be obeyed at all. All the emphasis, however, is on the second part of Jesus' answer: *Pay to God what belongs to God*.

What *is* God's anyway? The answer is inescapable: everything! From God we receive all that we are and have, except sin. God has given us the gift of life, and has preserved our lives until now in the midst all the dangers to life. God has given us our talents: everything from the five senses, which we share with the animals, to the uniquely human gifts of thought, speech, love and laughter, to the individual talents that make each person unique. How dull life would be if we were all the same!

If paying to God what is God's means putting God *first* in our lives. *Are we* putting God first in our lives? Or does he get the leftovers? Jesus understood, and taught, that we must give God the first fruits – out of gratitude. This grateful giving of first fruits was based on the truth that everything comes from God, and hence everything belongs to God. When we put God first in our lives, we make a beautiful discovery. We find that what is left over for ourselves is always enough, ultimately more than enough! We find that God will never be outdone in generosity.

Fr. Michael



¿ES LICITO PAGAR IMPUESTOS AL CESAR O NO? Es lo que se le pregunta a Jesús en el Evangelio de hoy. Mateo lo dice claro, aquellos que hicieron esta pregunta estaban interesados solo en una cosa: en cómo podrían poner una trampa a Jesús en su discurso. Si Jesús contestaba "sí", él podría perder su popularidad entre las multitudes, quienes representaban el pago. Si él contestaba "no", él podría ser denunciado a las autoridades por dar iniciativa al pueblo de quebrar la ley.

Jesús no dio ninguna de las dos respuestas, los que cuestionaban estaban buscando que Jesús respondiera, *Paguen al Cesar lo que es del Cesar*, rechaza la posición radical de los que clamaban que el gobierno romano era corrupto y no se debía obedecer. Todo el enfoque, de cualquier manera, es en la segunda parte de la respuesta de Jesús. *Pagar a Dios lo que es de Dios*.

¿Qué es de Dios? La respuesta es inevitable: ¡todo! De Dios recibimos todo lo que somos y lo que tenemos, excepto el pecado. Dios nos ha dado el don de la vida, y nos ha preservado nuestra vida hasta ahora en medio de todos los peligros de la vida. Dios nos ha dado talentos: todos nuestros cinco sentidos, los cuales compartimos con los animales, los únicos dones humanos de pensamientos, de hablar, amor y reír, a los talentos individuales que hacen a cada persona única. ¡Qué aburrida sería la vida si todos fuéramos iguales!

Si oramos a Dios que es lo que Dios significa poniendo a Dios en primer lugar en nuestra vida. ¿Estamos poniendo a Dios en primer lugar en nuestra vida? – con gratitud. Este gran donativo de los primeros frutos fue basado en la verdad de todo lo que viene de Dios, y por lo tanto todo pertenece a Dios. Cuando ponemos a Dios en nuestra vida, hacemos un gran descubrimiento. Encontramos que lo que es de sobra, es siempre suficiente para nosotros, ultimadamente más que suficiente! Encontramos que Dios nunca pierde generosidad.

Padre Miguel

HEALING MASS — Come experience the Lord's healing love! This Healing Mass is on Friday, October 27, at St. Mary Catholic Church (Eugene), at 7:00pm. Celebrants will be: Bishop Peter Smith, Fr. Ron Nelson, Fr. Edgar Rivera, & Fr. Bryce McProud. Sponsored by La Esperanza Ministry and St. Mary Charismatic Prayer Group. For info, contact Jacqui at 541-513-2607, or Dave at 541-689-8070.

..... *Vengan experiencia el Amor sanador del Señor en esta Misa de Sanación, en Viernes, 27 de Octubre, 7:00pm, en Iglesia Santa María (Eugene). Celebrantes: Obispo Peter Smith, Padre Ron Nelson, Padre Edgar Rivera, y Padre Bryce McProud. Organizado por: El Ministerio la Esperanza y el Grupo de Oración Carismática de la Iglesia Santa María. Para información, llame por encima de los números de teléfono.*

~ ALL ARE WELCOME! ~

WORKSHOP FOR EXTRAORDINARY MINISTERS OF HOLY COMMUNION AT MASS

AND TO THE **SICK AND HOMEBOUND** with Monsignor Gerard O'Connor

New Director of the OFFICE OF DIVINE WORSHIP for the Archdiocese of Portland

Where: St. Alice (1520 E Street / Spfld.) When: **October 28th** (Sat.)

9:30am Mass + refreshments 10:20am Talk by Msgr. O'Connor

Please RSVP to St. Mark (541-689-0725) or St. Peter office (541-688-1051)



PRIESTHOOD SUNDAY! October 29th

CELEBRATE OUR PRIESTS — write a note to Fr. Michael (or any of our pastors from the past!) to let him know he's appreciated. Cards are in the vestibule, by the "World Priest Day" poster — you can return them by way of the offertory basket, mail, or the drop box by the office door.

FAITH SERIES: CATECHISM THROUGH THE YEAR

WHAT IS APOLOGETICS?

"In the beginning ... God." These first words of the bible (Gn 1:1) affirm an essential teaching of the Christian faith: *Before all else, God is.* It's a reality that seems obvious to most Christians, yet many doubt or deny it.

Challenges are often issued to other articles of the Christian faith as well, such as the resurrection of Christ, and to specifically Catholic beliefs, like the unique authority of the pope. For this reason, Christians — and Catholic Christians in particular — often find themselves defending their beliefs.

The Greek word for "defense" is *apologia*. Our English word "apology" is derived from it. In its classical definition, "apology" did not mean an admission of wrong, as the modern English word suggests. Rather, an apology was a defense or justification of a belief. An example that will be familiar to students of Philosophy and the classics is Plato's *Apology*: an account of Socrates' defense of his teaching.

In the present context, then, "apologetics" refers to the reasonable defense of the Christian faith. It is one aspect of what our Lord Jesus talked about when he urged us to love God with all our mind (Lk 10:27). Faith is not opposed to reason; in fact, reason rightly understood, is a support to faith.

The foundations of Christian apologetics were laid by Jesus himself, when he presented 'many proofs' of his resurrection (Acts 1:3), including his appearance to skeptical and hard-nosed 'doubting' Thomas, as well as the other apostles (Jn 20:24-29). The resulting apostolic proclamation of the gospel included eyewitness (legal or scientific) testimony as a central feature (eg Lk 1:1-4; Acts 2:32).

St. Paul, likewise, engaged in apologetics, trying to persuade both Jews and Greeks of the truth of Christianity. His reasoned style of evangelization is demonstrated in his sermon at the Areopagus, in a philosophy-dominated Athens (Acts 17:22-34), and in his determination to "become all things to all, to save at least some" (1 Cor 9:22). This approach to sharing and defending faith should encourage Catholics today to follow Paul's example.

RECOMMENDED READING: Excerpt taken from The NEW Catholic Answer Bible

1 Cor 9:19-23 • 1 Pt 3:15 • Acts 7:2,17; 9:29; 18:4,19; 19:8-10; 22:1; 25:16 • Jude 3 • 1 Cor 9:3 • Phil 1:7,16 • Mk 12:28
& Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC) Nos. 31-49 • 156-159