**29th SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME [19th October, 2014]**

READINGS: Isaiah 45:1, 4-6 / Ps. 96 / 1 Thess. 1:1-5 / Matthew 22:15-21

THEME: TO GOD AND CAESAR

By Very Rev. Fr. John Louis ([http://frlouis.com](http://frlouis.com/))

“Give to Caesar what is Caesar’s and to God what is God’s” (Mt. 22:21). This is the very intelligent answer which Jesus gave to the coalition of Pharisees and Herodians who were attempting to trap Him. Unfortunately, however, some Christians have either misunderstood or misapplied this statement:

* Some Christians, for instance, use this biblical verse to justify why they can serve God while performing some indigenous (idol) religious practices.
* Others have used it to justify remaining Christians while seeking spiritual protections from unchristian sources or powers.
* Still, some Christian drunkards use this verse to justify why they drink excessively.

Beloved, none of the above applications is right. The reason why Jesus said the tax should be paid to Caesar is that the money or coin belonged to him as representing the Roman Empire (as shown by his image on it). This means that we should be good citizens of our country. In addition, we should give to God what belongs to Him. In short, then, GIVE TO YOUR COUNTRY WHAT BELONGS TO HER, AND TO GOD WHAT IS GOD’S.

This statement of Jesus can rightly be applied to marriage, family and work. The first application is: GIVE TO YOUR WIFE WHAT IS HER’S AND TO GOD WHAT IS HIS.

* If a man would give to God what He deserves, he should also give to his wife what is due her, otherwise his worship is meaningless.
* A man, who makes time for DEVOTION to God, should make time for his wife (that is, give her the ATTENTION she needs).
* A man, who loves God, should show the love and care that the wife deserves.

Secondly, when we turn the coin to see the other side, we read: GIVE TO YOUR HUSBAND WHAT IS HIS, AND TO GOD WHAT IS HIS!

* A woman who expresses her love for God by devotion and worship should give to her husband the respect and love due him.
* A woman who takes the spiritual food (Holy Communion), should in turn willingly cook for the husband.

Thirdly, this goes to children: GIVE TO YOUR PARENTS WHAT IS THEIRS, AND TO GOD’S WHAT IS HIS!

* As much as children obey God’s commandments, they should obey and honour their parents.
* As children should study God’s Word, so they should be studious to please their parents.

Fourthly, parents, GIVE TO YOUR CHILDREN WHAT IS THEIR DUE, AND TO GOD WHAT IS HIS!

* Parents, feed, cloth, and shelter your children as much as you contribute to the growth of God’s Church.

Fifth, to the employer: GIVE TO YOUR WORKERS WHAT IS THEIR DUE, AND TO GOD WHAT IS HIS.

* You may give generously to the Church, but if you don’t treat workers as fellow human beings, if you don’t pay them fairly, and their conditions of work is poor, your worship of God is a NEGATIVE BALANCE.

Finally, to workers: GIVE TO YOUR EMPLOYERS WHAT IS THEIR DUE, AND TO GOD WHAT IS HIS.

* You can be a very active church member (attending Masses every day), have daily quiet time, be very prayerful, and yet if you don’t respect your employer, work diligently and avoid stealing or embezzlement, your worship of God might be in vain.

CONCLUSION: Beloved, as we give to God what is His and to our country, spouse, parents, children, workers and employers what belongs to them, may we (in turn) enjoy fairness from others and be blessed eternally! Amen!