

This Week's Readings

First Reading: Isaiah 45: 1, 4-6.

Rulers and kingdoms are the great powers in the world.
But they are nothing, compared to the true power of God.

Second Reading: 1 Thessalonians 1: 1-5.

Paul reminds us that the Gospel he preached is the greatest power in our lives that we can know, because it is truth par excellence.

Gospel: Matthew 22: 15-21.

Jesus is confronted by trickery, but He banishes it with His truth:
"Give to Caesar what is Caesar's, but give to God what is God's".



Points for Reflection

1. *"Give to Caesar what is Caesar's."*

By these words Jesus tells us that we all depend to a large extent on our civil government. There are many services, which only a civil authority can provide. It is obvious that if these services are to continue, and even to be improved, they require the co-operation and support of the community at large. We do this mostly, though not only, through taxes. And this can be seen as *"giving to Caesar what is Caesar's"*.

2. *"Give to God what is God's."*

By these words Jesus reminds us that no state can claim for itself divine powers of absolute authority. All are subjects to the higher demands of truth and justice and the inviolable dignity of the human person, because every human person is the living image of God. We must *"give to God what is God's"* means that we must show respect and love to every human person because every human person is created in God's image.

3. Sometimes there is no conflict between Caesar and God. On the contrary, paying taxes (that is *"giving to Caesar what is Caesar's"*) in most cases is part of our duty to *"give to God what is God's"*. However, we do sometimes, from the standpoint of the Gospel, have to criticize our government actions or non-actions. And we need to realize that when we really love our country and its people, then we may have to stand in strong opposition to the authorities on certain issues. Of course, the authorities will try to present such people as traitors and as a threat to the stability of the country; actually, such people, who have the courage to show their care, often have far greater love for their country than the authorities themselves and the so-called "silent majority". It is because of "creative" conflict that our society makes progress. Provided that we always act in a positive and creative way, *"speaking the truth in love"* (Eph. 4: 15), then the flawed kingdoms that men build can, in time, become the platform of the kingdom of God.

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Kids' Corner

Colour the picture based on today's Gospel reading below.

