

FR.TK.REFLECTIONS 29th SUNDAY YEAR A. 2020

RENDER TO CAESAR WHAT BELONG TO HIM AND TO GOD WHAT BELONGS TO HIM!

What a provoking theme in our present society considering tensions in the world, when we compare the church and the political set up in the world of today!

We need to address the two institutions in a careful manner. They rotate on the same axis and to the person who is both political as well as religious.

Balancing and knowing where and when will help us align the boundary without friction since both are serving the wellbeing of humanity.

We have a **DUTY** and **RESPONSIBILITY** to the state, no doubt about this, no short cut. The state has too, has a **DUTY** over the wellbeing of the **CITIZENS, no escape in this either. We** should focus on **WHAT WE CAN DO FOR OUR STATE RATHER THAN WHAT THE STATE CAN DO FOR US.** This should help the state to help and foster the duty and responsibility to take care of HUMANITY and the ENVIRONMENT thus balancing NATURE for better living for humanity.

In all of this we need to be guided and steered forward by God's commandment. We need to go inward to ourselves and listen to that **INNER VOICE called CONSCIENCE.** This is the STEERING wheel in a car or *RUDDER on a ship. It steers our thoughts and our lives in making decisions for our safety.* As Christians and as people we are faced with difficult DECISIONS to make in *life.* We have been given that inner voice to GUIDE and DIRECT us.

How do we follow it?

How often do we **LISTEN** and **YEILD** to this voice?

Are we at **PEACE** with our **CONSCIENCE?**

Do we **SUFFOCATE IT.**

Today there are so many FORCES vying to CONTROL and MANIPULATE our conscience. It is so easy to **SELL our inner voice due to the pressure** of daily life. Conscience is one of the most precious gifts we have in life. We should be careful to keep it pure not to hand it over to anyone to control. As Christians God must have that final CLAIM on our conscience.

This is what our Lord Jesus is telling us today in the gospel when challenging the Pharisees, the Sadducees, and the Herodians who are using **DIRTY TRICKS** to trap him. Jesus is very categorical and straight **GIVE TO CAESAR WHAT IS CAESAR'S AND TO GOD WHAT BELONG TO GOD.** Then wanted to put Christ *in an awkward political religious conflict* so as to accuse him of **sabotaging the political setup of the time** thus being a TRAITOR. What Christ is putting across is that we have a DUTY and Obligation towards the state and there should not be a conflict if we DO THE RIGHT THING AT THE RIGHT TIME. TAXES must be PAID, the state must RUN, and the state has an OBLIGATION to CARE AND PROTECT ITS CITIZENS. The relationship between the church and state should be CORDIAL not FRICTIONAL. It may not be a COMPLETE UNION or a COMPLETE SEPARATION but should be COLLABORATIVE. The church is supposed to be the conscience of the state, no doubt about it.

We give *loyalty, taxes, and judgement to CAESAR BUT OUR CONSCIENCE, SOUL, and OUR CHOICES IN LIFE BELONG TO GOD.* If the coin had the image of CEASAR then Christ says give to him, what about us?

Whose image do we have? Are we NOT CREATED IN THE IMAGE AND LIKENESS OF GOD? **THEN WE GIVE OURSELVES TO GOD FOR WE BELONG TO HIM.**

Finally, in the evening of our life we will be responsible for what we have done as individuals and citizens not to Caesar, BUT TO GOD.

LET CAESAR BE CAESAR AND LET GOD BE GOD.