

LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST

Preface to the Eucharistic Prayer

The Mystery of Salvation

It is truly right and just, our duty and our salvation,
always and everywhere to give you thanks,
Lord, holy Father, almighty and eternal God,
through Christ our Lord.

For out of compassion for the waywardness that is ours,
he humbled himself and was born of the Virgin;
by the passion of the Cross he freed us from unending death,
and by rising from the dead he gave us life eternal....

Communion Antiphon

(to be recited privately)

Behold, the eyes of the Lord
are on those who fear him,
who hope in his merciful love,
to rescue their souls from death,
to keep them alive in famine.

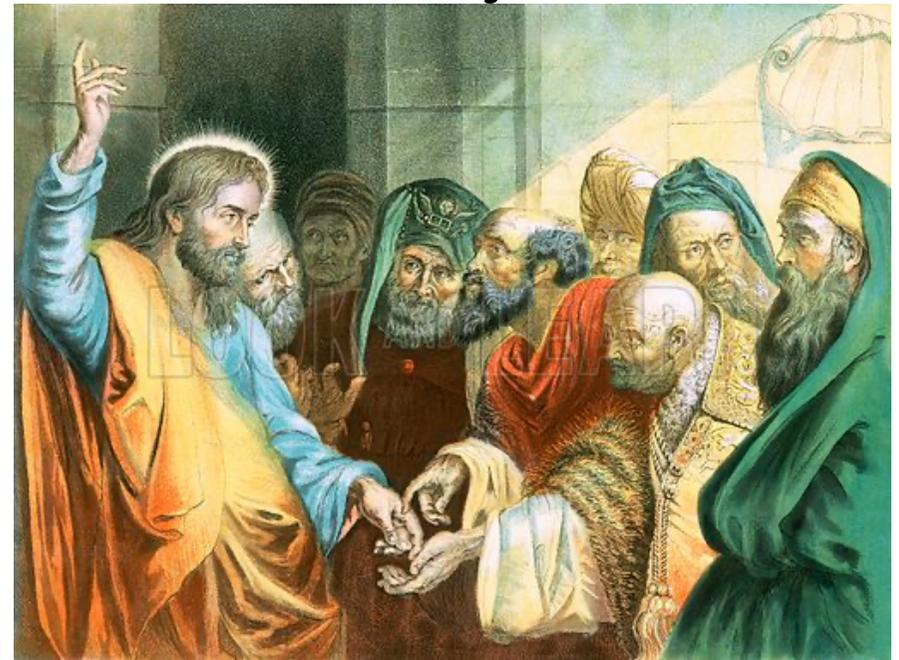
"We likewise believe that Christ shed his blood for each of us and that no one is beyond the scope of his universal love. If we go to the ultimate source of that love which is the very life of the triune God, we encounter in the community of the three divine Persons the origin and perfect model of all life in society."

(Pope Francis, "Fratelli Tutti", par.85).

SAINT MARY STAR OF THE SEA, LARGS OUR LADY OF PERPETUAL SUCCOUR, MILLPORT

29th ORDINARY SUNDAY (A)
MISSION SUNDAY
17-18 OCTOBER 2020

Readings



"They handed him a denarius, and he said,
'Whose head is this? Whose name?'
'Caesar's' they replied. He then said to them,
'Very well, give back to Caesar what belongs to Caesar –
and to God what belongs to God.'"

(Matthew 22:21)

ON MISSION TO CAESAR

With his words about Caesar and God, Jesus, the first to do so in history, separated religion from state. It is Christ who commands us to keep these two separate. The state is secular, i.e. it deals with the organization and administration of our earthly affairs, with its three-fold powers of executive (“the government”), legislative (“parliament”) and judicial (“the courts”). All of these are summed up in the word “Caesar.” The word “God” by contrast represents everything to do with our relationship with God: religion, church and the organization and administration of our spiritual affairs. It, too, can be said to have a three-fold power or ministry: the pastoral (the governance of the Church), the proclamation of the Word (teaching authority and content) and the sanctifying (divine worship, such as the Mass, and the sacraments).

But this formal separation of church and state does not mean that secular and religious powers and affairs do not interact. They certainly do. For example, the state itself has to have laws which recognise (not grant!) freedom of religion and protect it. How we live our earthly affairs has consequences for our spiritual and eternal life. In the end, Caesar belongs to God, too! Many times in history the state sought to control the church, and the church had to struggle to defend its rightful freedom. There were times, too, when church authorities tried to interfere in the legitimate independence of secular power. So, these two realities need to talk to one another in order to ensure that the one does not overstep its limits into the other, and also in order to resolve or avoid potential conflicts between them which can come about simply because a believer is also a citizen!

It is for this reason that the Catholic Church, in the figure of the Pope, developed from its inception the practice of sending its representatives to states and kingdoms and empires across the world. By the same token, the Pope received representatives from those secular authorities. This is another way of speaking of papal diplomacy. Its main aim is to serve the local church in a given country by strengthening the church’s ties with the Pope, but also by strengthening the ties of cooperation and mutual understanding between the Pope and local bishops, on the one hand, and the state government, on the other.

I had the privilege for over sixteen years of being part of papal missions to various countries and to the UN in Geneva. If you like, I was on a mission to Caesar, first to love and serve the church and people in the countries I was sent to, but secondly to promote and defend the rights and freedom of the Church, “of God”, before Caesar. This is just one of many forms of missionary work in the Church.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

First Reading

1 Thessalonians 1:1-5

From Paul, Silvanus and Timothy, to the Church in Thessalonika which is in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ; wishing you grace and peace from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

We always mention you in our prayers and thank God for you all, and constantly remember before God our Father how you have shown your faith in action, worked for love and persevered through hope, in our Lord Jesus Christ.

We know, brothers, that God loves you and that you have been chosen, because when we brought the Good News to you, it came to you not only as words, but as power and as the Holy Spirit and as utter conviction.

Responsorial Psalm 95(96):1,3-5,7-10

Give the Lord glory and power.

Gospel

Matthew 22:15-21

The Pharisees went away to work out between them how to trap Jesus in what he said. And they sent their disciples to him, together with the Herodians, to say, ‘Master, we know that you are an honest man and teach the way of God in an honest way, and that you are not afraid of anyone, because a man’s rank means nothing to you. Tell us your opinion, then. Is it permissible to pay taxes to Caesar or not?’ But Jesus was aware of their malice and replied, ‘You hypocrites! Why do you set this trap for me? Let me see the money you pay the tax with.’ They handed him a denarius, and he said, ‘Whose head is this? Whose name?’ ‘Caesar’s’ they replied. He then said to them, ‘Very well, give back to Caesar what belongs to Caesar – and to God what belongs to God.’

The Gospel of the Lord.