

29th Sunday in Ordinary Time (A)
Give the Lord Glory and Honor!

Isaiah 45:1, 4–6; Psalm 96:1, 3, 4–5, 7–8, 9–10; 1 Thessalonians 1:1–5b; Matthew 22:15–21

Dear brothers and sisters,

“Give the Lord glory and honor” (Psalm 45:7b).

This weekend’s Scripture readings remind us to remain loyal to God and to give glory and honor to His name (cf. Isa. 43:7, 1 Cor. 6:15-20).

In the Gospel, we learn that the Pharisees and Herodians conspired to trap Jesus and discredit him by asking whether paying taxes to Caesar was lawful: “Is it lawful to pay the census tax to Caesar or not?” (Mat 22:17). They raised the sensitive issue of taxation, which people at that time despised paying to the foreign ruler, to ensnare Jesus. Their question was malicious, aiming to force Jesus to take a side on whether paying taxes was lawful. However, Jesus avoided their trap. Instead of choosing a side, he redirected their attention to a higher level of awareness: understanding who they ultimately belonged to and where their loyalty should lie.

Jesus asked whose image and inscription were on the coin. The coin showed Tiberius Caesar, the emperor, and called him “pontifex maximus,” or high priest of Rome. By using these coins, people acknowledged Caesar’s authority. Jesus told them to give to Caesar what belongs to him and to give to God what belongs to God (cf. Mat 22:20-21). He reminded everyone that there is only one Lord and that we bear His image. Just as the coin belongs to Caesar, we belong to God. So when we say, “Give to God what belongs to God,” it means giving our whole selves, because we are made in His image.

The issue of paying taxes to Caesar shifted to putting things in the right order: God comes first, and everything else follows. The psalm says, “Give the Lord glory and honor” (Ps 96:7b). This reminds us that God should be at the center of our lives, guiding our choices and shaping how we see the world. We belong to God, and He knows what is best for us. He gives us guidance through the Ten Commandments, brings us together as a Church, and nourishes us with the Sacraments to support our spiritual journey and mission. Our loyalty should always be to God above all. We say this in the preface of the Mass: “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” (Preface of Sundays in Ordinary Time III).

But how do we honor and give glory to God? The Lord’s Prayer, which we have known since childhood, shows us three important ways:

First, we promise to keep God’s name holy and to honor Him. By attending Sunday Mass, we proclaim His glory and thank Him for everything in our lives—our successes and failures, joys and sorrows, struggles and hopes. We recognize that all we have belongs to Him.

Second, we strive to do God’s will on earth as it is in heaven. Our choices and actions should be guided by prayerful discernment. This means being good citizens and choosing leaders and groups that respect every person’s dignity and care for the environment.

Third, we are called to forgive those who have wronged us. God has forgiven us generously, so we should forgive others and show mercy. This also means praying for people with different beliefs or for those who have lost their way. By doing this, we honor God and bring glory to His name.

Finally, since we belong to God, we give back to Him. The Bible teaches us to give ten percent of our talents, time, and treasure. This is only a small part of all He has given us. What we give to God is not lost but a way to show our thanks. We return what is already His, and He promises to bless us many times over (cf. Lev 27:30, Prov 3:9-10).

We came from God, journey toward Him through Jesus in the Holy Spirit, and leave this world carrying nothing but the narrative of our lives; we answer to God for all we have and do, not to Caesar.

Let us give the Lord glory and honor now and always!

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