29th Sunday in Ordinary Time- A: World Mission Sunday: "Caesar's Coin and God's Image: Give God your heart and Share His Love with the World": Is 45:1, 4–6; 1 Thes 1:1–5b; Mt 22:15–21

Today, Jesus invites us to look beyond the coin in our hands and recognize the image of God in our hearts and in every human person.

Imagine the scene in today's Gospel. The opponents of Jesus ask him, "Is it lawful to pay the census tax to Caesar or not?" They are trying to trap him. If Jesus says, "Pay the tax," they can accuse him of supporting Roman occupation. If he says, "Do not pay the tax," they can accuse him of opposing Caesar. Jesus asks them to show him a coin. "Whose image is this and whose inscription?" They answer, "Caesar's." Jesus replies, **"Then repay to Caesar what belongs to Caesar and to God what belongs to God."** Here is the beautiful spiritual insight: the coin bears Caesar's image, but we human beings bear God's image.

Genesis 1:26–27 tells us that God created us in his own image and likeness. Caesar may claim his coin, but God claims our whole person—our conscience, our time, our talents, and our love. If the coin belongs to Caesar because it bears his image, and we bear God's image, how much of ourselves are we giving to God? God does not want only the money from our hands. But He wants the love in our hearts.

Jesus is not telling us to neglect our responsibilities to society. We must be responsible citizens, respect the law, and contribute to the common good. But our earthly responsibilities must never make us forget our deeper responsibility to God and to one another. **St. Thomas More**, who served his country and remained faithful to his conscience, reminds us **"that true citizenship must be guided by honesty and integrity."** And let us remember our families. Do not become so busy serving God and society that you neglect the people God has entrusted to you. Give your spouse love, your children time, and everyone patience and care. As St. John reminds us, "Let us love not in word or speech but in deed and truth" **(1 John 3:18).** Giving ourselves to God is not the loss of our humanity. It is a journey towards the fulfilment for which we were created. God doesn't ask merely for a place in your schedule. He invites you to give Him a place in every part of your life. Giving to God what belongs to God means allowing his truth to guide both our visible responsibilities and our hidden choices.

In the first reading, God speaks through the prophet Isaiah and reminds us that he is the Lord, and there is no other. God chooses Cyrus, a foreign king who does not fully know him, to accomplish his divine purpose and bring freedom to his people. This teaches us that God can work through people and circumstances we may never

expect. His plan is greater than our understanding. Our lives belong to the God who guides history and calls us by name.

This is especially meaningful on World Mission Sunday. **The mission of the Church does not belong to one country, one culture, or one group of people. It belongs to God.** God can use each one of us to make his love known. We may not be called to travel to a distant mission land. But we are called to bring Christ into our homes, our workplaces, our parish, and our communities.

In the second reading, St. Paul thanks God for the Thessalonians' **"work of faith and labor of love and endurance in hope."** Their faith was not merely something they spoke about. The Gospel reached them with power and the Holy Spirit, and it transformed their lives. This is the heart of Christian mission: **faith that works, love that serves, and hope that perseveres.**

Today, on World Mission Sunday, we remember missionaries who have left their homes, families, and countries to proclaim the Gospel and serve people in need. We pray for them, support them, and learn from their generous witness. But mission is not reserved for priests, religious sisters, or those who travel overseas. Through Baptism, every Christian is called to be a missionary disciple.

Mother Teresa of Calcutta offered her whole life to God by serving the poorest of the poor. She recognized Christ in every person she encountered. We too are called to see the image of God in the poor, the sick, the lonely, the stranger, and even those who are difficult to love. When you give your time to your children, care for an elderly person, welcome a stranger, or help someone in need, we are giving God what belongs to God. We are making his love visible.

Three practical takeaways for this Sunday: First, fulfill your duties. **Second**, give God your whole heart. **"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind" (Matthew 22:37). Third,** love the people God has entrusted to you.

On this World Mission Sunday, let us remember that the mission begins with recognizing whose image we bear. We belong to God, and we are sent to share his love. Let us be responsible citizens, faithful children of God, and loving members of our families. Let us support the Church's missionary work through our prayers, generosity, and personal witness. Caesar may receive his coin, but God deserves our hearts. And when you look at your spouse, your children, our neighbors, and those who suffer, let us remember: they, too, bear the image of God. May our faith become love, our love become service, and our service become a mission that brings the face of God to everyone we meet. In other words, give Caesar his coin, give others their dignity and give God the life that bears His image. Amen