Church At Home
St. Timothy's Lutheran Church – Pembroke, Ontario
Pentecost 21 **October 18, 2026**

Prayer of the Day
Sovereign God, raise your throne in our hearts. Created by you, let us live in your image; created for you, let us act for your glory; redeemed by you, let us give you what is yours, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

The Holy Gospel: Matthew 22:15-22
Then the Pharisees went and plotted to entrap him in what he said. So they sent their disciples to him, along with the Herodians, saying, "Teacher, we know that you are sincere, and teach the way of God in accordance with truth, and show deference to no one; for you do not regard people with partiality. Tell us, then, what you think. Is it lawful to pay taxes to the emperor, or not?" But Jesus, aware of their malice, said, "Why are you putting me to the test, you hypocrites? Show me the coin used for the tax." And they brought him a denarius. Then he said to them, "Whose head is this, and whose title?" They answered, "The emperor's." Then he said to them, "Give therefore to the emperor the things that are the emperor's, and to God the things that are God's." When they heard this, they were amazed; and they left him and went away.

Homily

I greet you in the name of Jesus, our risen Saviour. Amen.

Don't you just love leading questions? I mean, the type of question that sets you up to give the answer the person posing the question is looking for; to support her or his point of view? I believe we all have been in this situation sometime or another throughout our life; someone trying to trap us into giving an answer that we believe is not correct.

This is where we find Jesus in today's story.

According to Matthew's account, Jesus has been riding a wave of popularity. You might say he has also been a bit of a rebel rouser since entering Jerusalem. Quite frankly, the religious leaders – well – their skin was wearing a bit thin. They have had quite enough of his actions and his recent telling of provocative, even threatening parables calling into question their own authority.

It is for this reason the two groups, the Pharisees and Herodians, that normally wanted little to do with each other, declared a temporary truce in order to work together to trap this up-start rabbi.

The Pharisees were committed to the worship and following of God. Some believed that following God meant to risk being separated from the world. Many believed in strict

interpretation of the biblical law. They were serious about their faith. They despised the Roman Empire.

They did share a great deal in common with Jesus. They aligned themselves with the oppressed commoners. On the other hand, the Herodians were put in power by the Romans and advocated supporting Roman "governance" of Israel. It is clear, both had much to gain by trapping Jesus with this question:

Is it lawful to pay taxes to the emperor, or not?

The tax that they are referring to is the Imperial Tax: a tax that was paid as a tribute to Rome to support the Roman occupation of Israel. That's right, first century Jews were required to pay their oppressors a denarius a year to support their own oppression.

The question is rather ingenious.

Should Jesus answer yes; the crowds who have been supporting him would not simply disappear, but turn against him. Should he answer no; then he would put himself against the Romans; not a wise thing to do. So, they have him. Or at least that's what they think.

Jesus asks for a coin used to pay the tax; with which they brought him a denarius. There on the face of the coin was Caesar Tiberius and a proclamation of his divinity "Son of God", forcing them to break the first two Commandments.

You shall have no other gods.

You shall not make wrongful use of the name of the Lord your God.

All of this sharpens the bite of Jesus' response, "Give, therefore, to Caesar, the things that are Caesar's and to God the things that are God's."

Jesus turns the tables with one statement sharing and reminding those in attendance that everything belongs to God.

Is Jesus doing the same to you and I today? Now, I am not suggesting that Jesus is trying to trap us – not for a moment! Perhaps to think about that image of Caesar on the coin – turn to the front of your Guide to Worship if you require a visual image. Perhaps, Jesus is asking whose image is on us?

It is hard not to hear echoes of the first chapter of Genesis and the creation story; where God declares the divine intent to make us in God's own image. *Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness.*

We were made in the image and likeness of God, and because we bear God's likeness we are to act like God. Not like small "g" gods who exalt their authority over others for self-gain but like God – the one who creates and sustains, and nurtures, and redeems, and saves…..no matter what the cost. We are called to serve as God's agents, God's partners, and God's co-workers,

exercising dominion over creation not as an act of power but rather as an act of stewardship and love.

My friends in Christ. You belong to God! What God wants is nothing less than to come and abide in your heart. The point is that you have been made in the image and likeness of God. God loves you. God keeps your picture in the divine wallet and on the heavenly refrigerator. Jesus did not care about the tax, for his real concern was that you and I live into the image and likeness of the God who lovingly created us; a God who deeply loves us. Amen.

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit let us pray as Jesus taught us……..

Lord's Prayer
Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

Benediction
The Lord bless you and keep you,
The Lord's face shine upon you and be gracious unto you,
The Lord look upon you with favour and give you (+) peace. Amen.

Dismissal
Go out in Joy. Be led forth in peace.
Thanks be to God.

STTLC Communique

In Our Prayers Today..... Casey Wierzbicki, Joanna Spencer, Marie Lenser, Mike Harrington, Lila Martinat, Irlavere Tubbe, Tracy Schori and Christa Reitlingshoefer.

(Copyright Administered by Augsburg Fortress SAS104065)