Commentary on the Readings for Sunday, October 18, 2026
The 29th Sunday in Ordinary Time

The theme for all of today's Readings comes from the last line of the first reading: ***"I am the Lord, there is no other."*** Indeed, each line of the first reading is important and each tells us something about God, not in a negative way, as is so often the case, but in positive expressions of who God is and what He can and will do for mankind if only we would follow His instructions. Let us look at this in more detail.

The **First Reading** is from the ***Prophet Isaiah (45:1-6).*** The Prophet has been given a message from God to Cyrus, King of Persia, who has just defeated the King of Babylonia in the 6th century BC. Cyrus is told that it was by the hand of God that he was successful in his battles and that God will use him to great advantage if he follows God's instructions. Cyrus was not a Jew, but he recognized true authority when faced with it and, in humility, he bowed in favor of the God of the Israelites. Each line of this passage expresses a positive attribute of God toward His people. We would do well to review this passage from Isaiah frequently in our daily prayers, because when God is truly in control of our lives, nothing will overcome Him or us. St. Paul gives us a similar message in his Letter to the ***Romans (8:33- 39).***

The **Responsorial Psalm** ***(96:1-10)*** is the beautiful prayer of praise to God that faithful Jewish people sing when they recognize God's gracious benevolence toward His people. Christians also should sing this song of praise for God has promised eternal life to all those who are faithful to Him.

The **Second Reading** is from ***St. Paul's First Letter to the Thessalonians (1:1-5).*** Being faithful to God and His will or instructions comes to us in many ways as Paul points out to his helpers, Silvanus and Timothy. If we are in tune with God's Holy Spirit He will help us in our efforts toward faithfulness; however, we must do our part just as they did.

The **Gospel Reading** is from ***Matthew (22:15-21).*** Have you ever flipped a coin (heads or tails) to see who would win?" This passage is where that practice came from, but that is not the meaning here. What Jesus is saying to the Pharisees is: when faced with true and lawful authority we must obey. Further, Jesus is telling the Pharisees (and us today) that even when we disagree or dislike some law or instruction, if it comes from lawful authority we must obey. He further implies that the Pharisees were not obeying the laws of God. Instead, they were exploiting the people for their own personal gain. To disregard lawful authority is unlawful and to disregard the teachings or instructions of God and His Church is wrong. After all, God is the ultimate authority, ***"there is no other."*** Something to think about during your prayer time this week!

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