

29th Sunday OT – Matthew 22:15-21

Matthew relates a series of encounters between Jesus and groups among the Jews. The first is between Jesus and the pharisees who wanted to trap him. Addressing him as "Teacher," the unbeliever's address of Jesus in this gospel, they put a trick question, intended to embarrass him whatever his answer. Jesus recognized again the **hypocrisy** he met so often in this gospel.

Noticed that pharisees are using the Word of God for their own means, in this case to trap Jesus. The Word of God must be allowed to speak to us. What is the message that today's gospel is trying to speak to us? ***Give to God what belongs to God!*** We don't need to be told what to pay to Caesar or his equivalents, especially if it benefits the community.

What are the things that belongs to God that we should give? The first and most important is Liturgy. The word breaks down into two Greek words: ***lay***, which means the people, from which we get our word laity and ***erg***, which means work, from which we get our word from physics that is a measure for work. Liturgy, the work that the people do to praise God. We owe the praise that rightly belongs to God each Sunday as we, a faith community, join together and perform as best we can. That is straight from the Baltimore Catechism, We are made to praise, love and serve God in this life and in the next. And our priests, who stand in for Christ Jesus, are here to help us.

The sad thing is that there is this movement in the Church to turn all around again. To turn the clocks back, where the priests and his servants do all the work of the people. This movement is putting in communion rails to even keep the "lay" out of the sanctuary! The Latin Mass of old, or the Tridentine Mass, did not even need the "lay," as witnessed by the many altars around the old cathedrals that were build before Vatican II, where the priests could come out and say Mass without anyone, even a server. It's sort of like eating a snack by oneself.