

Dual Citizenship

In today's reading we see that the Pharisees and Herodians joined together to try to trap Jesus.

Although they normally disagreed with each other, they asked Jesus whether it was right to pay the imperial tax to Caesar.

If Jesus said yes, the Pharisees could accuse Him of being opposed to God. If He said no, the Herodians could accuse Him of rebellion against Rome.

Jesus saw through their trap. He asked them to show Him a coin and then asked whose image was on it. When they answered, "Caesar's," Jesus replied, *"Give to the emperor the things that are the emperor's, and to God the things that are God's."*

Jesus' answer reminds us that we live with responsibilities in two kingdoms. We are citizens of this world, and Scripture teaches us to respect governing authorities, pay our taxes and give people the respect and honour they are due. At the same time, our first and greatest allegiance belongs to God. We are called to seek His kingdom, love Him with all our heart, and worship Him alone.

Sometimes these responsibilities can come into conflict. For Christians living under persecution, following Jesus may mean disobeying authorities when governments demand what belongs to God. Their example reminds us that our ultimate allegiance must always be to Christ, even when following Him comes at a personal cost.

Jesus used the image on the coin to make His point. The coin carried Caesar's image, but we have been created in the image of God and marked with the seal of the Holy Spirit. We therefore belong to God.

This means that we live in this world, but our true citizenship is also in heaven. Until Christ returns, we are called to respect those in authority, fulfil our earthly responsibilities, and pray for our leaders. But our worship, devotion and ultimate obedience belong to God alone.