

## Reflection for the 29<sup>th</sup> in Ordinary time

October 17 & 18, 2020

Over the past weeks, our Gospel from Matthew has been tracing the development of the new Christian community, we today call the Church. In today's [tonight's] reading, Matthew recognizes that the Pharisees and the Herodians have joined to capture Jesus in a trap. They throw this challenge: "Is it lawful to pay the census tax to Caesar or not?" If Jesus answers "yes" he offends the Pharisees, if he answers "no", he offends the Herodians.

Jesus replies by asking for a coin and saying: "Who's image and inscription is this?" They reply "Caesar's!" And his famous line is: Give to Caesar what belongs to Caesar to God what belongs to God. All this only adds to the frustration and anger of the Pharisees. With this we see again what leads to the death of Jesus.

The letter to the Thessalonians is believed to be the earliest writing to the newly established Church community. Paul writes to encourage these new Christians that they belong to the "Baptized", to the members. Therefore, they belong to God. With this confidence, Paul is asking them to believe that they live IN God. And that is accomplished through the "grace of the Holy Spirit". The presence of God is therefore not limited by space and time. Living IN God is allowing the Spirit of God to take possession of us. Now, all this takes **surrendering**, and at the same time, **endurance** to live IN the mystery we call GOD.

For us too, we can say we believe in God that we have Faith and Hope. But this takes our effort too! Yes, to be a member of Christ's Community is not easy, it is a challenge. Ironically It takes courage to surrender to the presence of that same Spirit. That is how we "practice" our Faith. We must be people of Prayer; to be resilient and courageous, to gain HOPE in the Love God has for us.

Do we honor our voting privilege? Do we take seriously all the choices we must make? By our profession of Faith, we believe in the wisdom and grace of the Holy Spirit. Let us live that lifestyle with conviction. Let us live with HOPE that God is still in charge.