October 22, 2023

From the Desk of Fr. Leo

There is at least one word in the English language that has the power to elect politicians to high office, finance battleships, cause economic hardships, and get you to pull your hair out of your head. One word. Wars have been fought over this word nations established, and people sent to jail for not taking heed when this word was spoken. The word is taxes!

Someone has said that there are only two things that we can be certain of in this life, and they are death and taxes. As Christians, we know that Jesus has conquered the first. But what of this second anathema that we face? The gospel seems to indicate that we are on our own and that Jesus expects us to pay them. "render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar's" says our Lord, "and to God the things that are God's. Has Matthew from the tax collector's office, been whispering in Jesus' ear?

A number of questions come to mind. First, who started these taxes anyway? I presume that from the time we began to inhabit this earth, some sort of taxes were taken. But they were not part of God's order of things. Nowhere in the Book of Genesis account do we read "and God levied taxes on Adam and Eve, and it was good." Nor was Moses given a tablet of stone with the inscription, "Thou shalt pay thy taxes." Taxes were levied and taxes were collected, but from the beginning they were a human invention for the necessity of earthly rulers, the building of temporal roads and aqueducts, and the financing of battles of the flesh and not of the spirit.

Yet, God has always required a rightful share for the work of God's dominion. The first fruits of every harvest were set aside by the early people of Israel for the Lord. Even a temple tax was established and gathered by the priests for the maintenance of religion. Is this why Jesus seems to support the payment of taxes?

Our Lord is not telling us what we already know, namely that our taxes ought to be paid. He is also not telling us that payment to God is due. Rather, he is revealing to us who we are, what we are, and what we can be with a coin. This is what you work for and what you slave for. You have come to believe that this coin is the measure of your value, the symbol of your worth.

But the true measure of our value has to do with the likeness and inscription borne on our bodies and souls.

As Caesar has cast the denarius in his image, God has cast each of us in God's own mage. As Caesar sends out as wage and calls back in tax, God also sends out the bearers of God's likeness to be the golden coinage of a heavenly realm. But God calls us back, demanding for God's own self the sum of our lives.

Jesus is the gatherer of this tax, God's collector of souls stamped with the divine image and inscribed with God's name. Come to me, he says. By your following, you will find your true self. In my words I will show you the way to the One who has made you. On my cross I will settle your debts. Lost coins are we all, and in Jesus has God invited us back to the eternal treasury.

Fr. Leo Alban Asuncion



Mass Intentions for the Week

Tues.	October 24	11:00AM
Jojo Bernardo †	Ν	Aarcella de Leon
Wed.	October 25	11:00AM
Jojo Bernardo †		Lacsina Family
Thur.	October 26	11:00AM
Thanksgiving		Ed & Mae
Fri.	October 27	11:00AM
Bill Silva †		Stella Noe
<u>Sat.</u>	October 28	4:30PM
Virginia & Nicola	· •	
(Thanksgi Sun.	ving) October 29	9:00AM
People of the Paris	sh	
Port Costa		11:00AM

Margaret A. Cleary †

Gina Pedrotti

Sunday Collection - October 15th

St. Rose, Crockett	\$1918
Catholic Voice	\$101
St. Patrick Mission	\$315
Catholic Voice	\$10

Thank you again to all who support our Parish!

<u>Vírtus Traíníng</u>

Virtus will help you learn how to see signs of abuse, how to help those who have been abused in the past and how to avoid creating an environment where abuse can happen. Taking these classes can help **ALL THE VULNERABLE PEOPLE IN YOUR LIFE AND SOCIETY!** It goes far beyond just our little parish and children.

The website is <u>https://www.virtusonline.org/virtus</u>. If you are unsure of doing this at home, or don't have access to the internet, we are happy to have you come to the office and take the class on the computer here with help. **Remember the online class does not have to be taken all at once; you may do it at your own pace. NO MATTER WHAT POSTION YOU SERVE IN OUR PARISH, YOU NEED TO DO THIS TRAINING!**

All Souls Mass

We will be celebrating our traditional All Souls Remembrance Mass on Saturday, November 4th at 10:30AM. If you want the names of your departed to be included in the Prayers of the Faithful, please submit them (\$10 donation per name) by Wednesday

November 1st (All Saint's Day)! We invite all that attend for some light refreshments after the mass. If you are able to donate some store-bought sweets, please let the office know, 510-787-2052.



<u>October Mass Count</u>

Every October the Diocese asks its parishes to count the number of participants at each weekend mass. Now is a great time to check in on those you may not

have seen at Mass for a while and encourage them back, invite someone new to come along or even just try to carve out some time in your busy



schedule to make it to one of the masses yourself!

Special Second Collection next weekend

Pope Francis, in his message for World Mission Sunday 2023, reflects on the theme "Hearts on fire, feet on the move," based on the story of the disciples who encountered Jesus on their way to Emmaus (cf. Lk 24:13-35). He invites all of us to "set out once more, illumined by our encounter with the risen Lord and prompted by his Spirit. Let us set out again with burning hearts, with our eyes open and our feet in motion. Let us set out to make other hearts burn with the word of God, to open the eyes of others to Jesus in the Eucharist, and to invite everyone to walk together on the path of peace and salvation that God, in Christ, has bestowed upon all humanity."

On World Mission Sunday, we join our Holy Father in supporting his missions. As we pray and respond here at home, we share in those celebrations taking place in every parish and school throughout the world. Together, through our prayers and financial support, we bring the Lord's mercy and concrete help to the most vulnerable communities in the Pope's missions.

