29th Sunday in Ordinary Time, October 18, 2026

Isaiah 45:1, 4-6 - The Lord chooses Cyrus to subdue the nations for Israel's sake.

1 Thessalonians 1:1-5b – St. Paul gives thanks to God for the faith of the Thessalonians, and their 'labor of love and endurance in hope of our Lord Jesus Christ'.

Matthew 22:15-21 - Religious leaders team together to test Jesus on paying taxes to Caesar.

YOU BELONG TO GOD

The Discovery: If you asked your spouse, children, coworkers, or friends to describe you, **what would they say?** Kind or critical? Patient or impatient? Humble or always needing to be right?

Story: A little boy once looked at an old photograph of his father as a child and shouted, "Mom! I look just like Dad!" His mother smiled and said, "Of course you do. You are his son." Obviously, this kid did not need to tell people whose son he was. People could see it. That's where Jesus takes us in today's gospel passage: When people look at you and me, can they see God our Father? Can they see Jesus in us?

The Coin: A team of Pharisees and Herodians (they had a common hatred for Jesus) think they are asking Jesus about taxes. Jesus knows they are really asking about identity. He takes a coin and asks them, "Whose image is this?" "Caesar's image, was their response." Jesus then tells them, "Give to Caesar what belongs to Caesar and to God what belongs to God."

Tiberius Caesar was the reigning Roman head of state at the time (the emperor, much like the President). The coin bears his image, so it belongs to him – Tiberius Caesar. Now if the coin belongs to Caesar because it bears his image, **then what belongs to God? You do - because you bear God's image. I do because I bear the image of God.** Dear friends, that is the heart of today's gospel passage. **Each one of us here belongs to God.**

Today, two kids, Wilk Douglas Martinez and Otto Lee Huppert, will be welcomed as new members of both the universal communion of saints and the St. Pius X Catholic family, as we will pledge to help raise them in the Catholic faith, right this reflection. We will place the name of the Triune God (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) upon them to mark their new Christian identity in Jesus Christ and membership with the universal community. Wilk Douglas and Otto Lee, and everyone baptized, can proudly enter any Catholic church anywhere in the world, pray, worship, celebrate, and receive the sacraments because they are members in Christ. **They belong to God.**

Philip's last recorded request at the Last Super (John 14: 8-11)

As Jesus prepares to depart the world, there were a lot of uncertainties with his disciples. "Philip said, ***"Lord, show us the Father, and that will be enough for us."*** Jesus answered: "Don't you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? ***Anyone who has seen***

me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father '? Don't you believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in me? The words I say to you I do not speak on my own authority. Rather, it is the Father, living in me, who is doing his work. Believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; or at least believe on the evidence of the works themselves.

Christ teaches us here that He is the complete revelation of what God is like. Knowing, seeing, and believing in Jesus provides the complete and sufficient revelation of God the Father. The search for God, for truth, and for reality ends in Christ Jesus. Jesus is the visible, tangible image of God, and so we should be. **You and I belong to God.**

The Distortion: The problem is not that we stop belonging to God. Rather, the problem is that we let the world shape us more than God shapes us. So our need to be right becomes more visible than His humility. Our anger becomes more visible than the mercy of God. Our need to win becomes more visible than God's compassion. And the fruits of this attitude are predictable: We become harder to live with, quicker to judge, slower to forgive, and less willing to admit that we are ever wrong. ***The image of God is still there, but the resemblance begins to fade.*** St. Teresa of Calcutta once said: "When I look at them, I see Jesus. And when they look at me, I hope they see Jesus too." Every day people are looking at us and asking: "What does your God look like?" And the answer depends largely on what they see in us. The coin belonged to Caesar because it carried Caesar's image. **You and I belong to God because we carry God's image.**

Today Jesus calls us to fulfill our civic duties, support the mission of the church, and at the same time to entrust our hearts, our time, and relationships to God. This means allowing the Word of God to guide our decisions, His love to shape our relationships, and His truth to govern our conduct. The taxes go to the IRA; we actively engage in politics, but do we have time for prayer? We protect our reputations, but do we neglect our conscience?

So, this week, think of the one person who frustrates you. The one person who tests your patience. The one person you are trying to prove wrong. The next time you are tempted to win the argument, get the last word, or prove your point, choose humility over being right. Choose mercy over winning. Show them your Father. Because the greatest tragedy is not losing the image. Rather, it's letting the resemblance fade away. Amen.

-Fr. Martin Ezeihuaku, MSP