

Thursday, October 19, 2017- Weekly letter from Fr. John Allison

Dear members and friends of our parish family,

On this upcoming 20th Sunday after Pentecost our Gospel reading from Matthew (22:15-22) again shows Jesus in a confrontation with the religious and political authorities in Jerusalem. This time they seek to entrap him with a question they believe will either paint him as one disloyal to the Jewish tradition or as one who his disloyal to the Romans. Either way, Jesus would lose.

The scene begins with the Pharisees and supporters of Herod, two groups normally at odds with one another, offering false praise to Jesus in an attempt to take him off guard. The question they ask that follows, "Is it lawful to pay taxes to the emperor, or not?" reflects the tension in first-century Palestine as to how far a faithful Jew could cooperate with Roman authorities and still be faithful to Israel's covenant with God. Of course, Jesus is well aware of the deceit behind the question and turns the tables on his opponents once again. Jesus' answer, "Give to the emperor the things that are the emperor's and to God the things that are God's reminds us that we are God's own and that all of our gifts and abilities are for our ongoing service to God. The things of the world may appear to have some claim but, just as the coin was stamped with the image of the emperor, we are stamped in the image of God. I ask you to consider what are the claims of the world that are on you and how do they hinder your full realization of God's ultimate claim?

In preparation for Sunday, I invite you to further reflect on our Gospel reading, as well as our text from Isaiah (45:1-7) and 1 Thessalonians (1:1-10). We welcome Deacon Mary-Carol as our preacher.

Sunday will also mark the beginning of our stewardship campaign with the commissioning of our Stewardship Committee. Brad Berry, Wendy Copson-Higgins, and Bill Krenicki will come before the congregation to receive our blessing as we begin build on this important component of our discipleship.

Finally, I remind you also that following Sunday's 10am Eucharist, I will convene a parish meeting to discuss our participation in the Parish Partnership. As we near the end of three months together, I believe it is important to reflect on the arrangement thus far and consider how it might benefit our ministry together. In my October newsletter article I offer further questions for reflection, but, generally speaking, I want to hear your thoughts, concerns, and questions about Church of Our Father and our growing participation in the Parish Partnership. I will offer some brief comments to begin, but this is your meeting and your chance to have a voice as we continue to move forward. I look forward to hearing from all of you.

Faithfully,

John+