



29th Sunday in Ordinary Time (Year A)



Matthew 22: 15 – 21

The Pharisees went and plotted to entrap Jesus in what he said. So they sent their disciples to him, along with the Herodians, saying, “Teacher, we know that you are sincere, and teach the way of God in accordance with truth, and show deference to no one; for you do not regard people with partiality. Tell us, then, what you think. Is it lawful to pay taxes to the emperor, or not?”

But Jesus, aware of their malice, said, “Why are you putting me to the test, you hypocrites? Show me the coin used for the tax.” And they brought him a denarius.

Then he said to them, “Whose head is this, and whose title?” They answered, “Caesar’s.” Then he said to them, “Give therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and to God the things that are God’s.”

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Reflection:

Just like the coin, used to pay taxes, had the head of the Roman King on it (with the Titles: “son of god” and “priest of the most high”), so we are made in the likeness of God and are “Children of God”. When Jesus tells his enemies to give “to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and to God the things that are God’s,” he is telling them to do what is required of us by the world, but to never forget that all that we are and have comes from God and belongs to God.



Table Discussion (at mealtime):

As men and women created in the image of God, we belong to God. Give one example how this has affected a decision you have had to make.



“God Money” Game:



Backgrounder:

Jesus lived during the time of Roman Rule. The Jews were not free to use their own money, but were forced to use the money that the Romans used. Many Jews complained about the Roman money because it had a picture of the Roman King on one side with the title: “Son of God”. Some Roman kings were even worshipped as gods. This was one of the main reasons why the Jews did not allow Roman money to enter their Temple/Church.

By looking at a variety of Canadian money, both bills and coins, decide what your “God money” will look like. Have the children make “God money” and come up with ways that they can earn it.

The game (one or more days):

- Children can earn “God money” for a number of good deeds they are willing to do.
- “God money” can be saved up throughout a determined time.

End-of-game discussion:

- What did you like about “God money”? What did you not like about it?
- How did “God money” make you more aware of “giving to God the things that belong to God”?

End-of-game Celebration:

- Have all the children come forward and place their “God money” on one table.
- Stand around the table with hands lifted up to God.

Tell the family members, “repeat after me”:

- You created us in your likeness (they repeat).
- We give you all that we have done (they repeat).
- It is not as much as you have done (they repeat).
- All is yours, God. All is yours. (they repeat).

Hold one another’s hands and pray the “Our Father” together.



Share in a special treat.



St. Christopher:

As a child, his parents named him Reprobus. And, by the time he was ten, he had outgrown all his clothes. Reprobus was bigger than any man around and most people feared him. They could not believe that someone that big could be kind and gentle at heart.

Reprobus grew up to be a soldier. And a great soldier he was. He was so big and strong that no one could defeat him. Anyone who tried was soon knocked down to size.

One day, Reprobus decided that he wanted to give his service to the greatest king on earth. After all, Reprobus was so big and strong, only the most powerful king would do.

He joined the most powerful king's army and fought for him in every battle. This went on for a few years until, one day, Reprobus noticed how the king trembled at the name of the Devil. "If my king is afraid of the Devil, the Devil must be more powerful," Reprobus thought. So, he left the king's army to serve the Devil instead.

He joined the Devil and his demons in their attack on a village. On seeing the villagers run in fear before the Devil and his demons, Reprobus could only conclude, "Surely, I have found the most powerful king of all."

But, one day, when he saw the Devil tremble at the sight of a cross, Reprobus discovered the Devil was not as powerful as he thought. When, later that day, Reprobus realized the Devil was afraid of Christ, he left the Devil's service in search for the most powerful king of all.

After a few months, Reprobus decided to visit a holy man. "Excuse me, sir," he said. "Could you please help me find Jesus. I have learned that he the most powerful king of all and I would like to serve him." "The one you are looking for," the Holy man began, "can only be served through acts of love, service, fasting and prayer." "I know nothing of these things," Reprobus replied. "Could you please tell me what to do." So, the holy man instructed him to use his size and strength in a particular way.

The holy man brought Reprobus to a raging river. "Carry the people across this river on your broad shoulders, as only you can," the holy man instructed, "and you will serve the most powerful king of all in this way."

Reprobus performed this service for many years, until, one day, after carrying a number of people across the river, he was approached by a little child. "I need to cross the river," the child said. "Could you carry me?" "Of course, I can" Reprobus answered. "You weigh less than a feather to me."

But when he placed the child on his shoulders and reached the middle of the river, the child became as heavy as the world itself. The river became more violent and the current, against his body, was strong. At one point, Reprobus thought he was going to crumble under the weight.

When he reached the other side, and the child dismounted, Reprobus was as curious as could be. "What happened back there?" He asked. "You were as light as a feather, but, at one point, I was carrying the weight of the world?" The child smiled. "Not just the world," the child replied, "but the one who made the world and all it holds. I am the king you have been serving for all these years. Today, I have made myself known to you."

From that day onward, Reprobus' name was changed. We now know him as "Christopher", meaning "Christ Bearer", the one who carried Christ. Some people still wear a medallion that is cast in his name. He is the big man carrying a small child across a river, the patron saint of travellers.

Mission Sunday: Generally the 29th Sunday in Ordinary Time



St. François de Laval:

François de Laval was born 400 years ago in France. After his father and two older brothers died, he surrendered his claim to the family estate to his younger brother in order to pursue his studies as a priest. When he was ordained a priest at the age of 24, his bishop put him in charge of a very important job for the next seven years.

But François had his eyes set on a missionary posting. So, he left the important job he was doing in order to pursue his dream to be sent to the French controlled area south of China to teach the Christian faith to those who had not heard it.

When he didn't get it, François spent the next three years looking after a number of monasteries, using his talents in looking after them.

It didn't take long for the bishops of the area to realize that François was an exceptional priest. And, so, when the Pope wanted to send someone to Canada, to be the first bishop of the entire country, they recommended François de Laval for the job.

François jumped at the opportunity. As Bishop of Canada, he would be bringing the Christian faith to a whole new people. In this way, his dream to be a missionary would be fulfilled.

It was not easy being Bishop of so large an area. Not only did he have to travel far from home, but he had to live without many of the luxuries that he enjoyed in France.

He also had to bring some order to the Church in Canada. The few missionary priests that had gone there before him were used to doing things their own way and they weren't always open to having a boss.

François was very quick in setting to work. He realized that his newly created diocese needed its own school where new priests could be trained, and new buildings to serve as churches. In his work as a missionary and as a bishop, he was always very concerned about the needs of his people and the important part that religion played in their lives.

Often visiting each church building he helped to build, and doing everything he could to support the missionary outreach to the Native People, François was constantly on the move.

As he grew older, and he began to suffer from illness, he continued to help the poor and celebrate Mass as best he could. When he finally died, they buried his body in the church he helped build.

Note: A **missionary** is someone who goes to another part of the world to spread the message of Jesus to those who haven't heard of him, or where the Christian faith is still new. Some areas of Northern

Canada are considered to be missionary regions. On Mission Sunday, we are encouraged to pray and support the many missionaries, and their work, in Canada and around the world.

Reflection question:

How is God calling you to help spread the message of his love and mercy in your community? Throughout the world?