

Christ Child Catholic Church
***Dedicated to Growth in Christ and to the
Challenges of Loving Service***

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TWENTY-NINTH SUNDAY IN
ORDINARY TIME
OCTOBER 18, 2020

First reading Isaiah 45: 1, 4-6

Cyrus, God's Instrument

The oracles from the second half of his book urge the people to trust in the Lord. With all their illusions removed by the collapse of Jerusalem, the people now have the opportunity to embrace a new role in life. They can set aside their pride and choose instead to become servants of God. In God's service they will gain advantages they never knew before.

To call a pagan king the Lord's **anointed** would have shocked Isaiah's audience, because it was usually a term reserved for Israel's appointed leader. In this instance, God would work through Cyrus to accomplish His purpose.

The Cyrus Cylinder, a rounded tablet commemorating the exploits of the great leader, speaks of Marduk, the high god of Babylon, grasping the hand of the king. It corrects this interpretation: It was the hand of the Lord of Israel that accomplished all this.

"That there is none beside me. I am the Lord, and there is no other..."

Give the Lord Glory and honor!

Second reading 1 Thessalonians 1: 1-5

Greeting and Their Good Example

Paul brought the gospel to Thessalonica about the year 50. Persecuted there, he moved to Beroea and then to Athens and Corinth. He wrote this

letter in 51, the earliest canonical work of the New Testament.

Paul Christianizes the usual greeting. Instead of "greetings," he wishes grace, the free saving action of God, and peace, reflecting Shalom, perfect union with God and all creation.

Thanksgiving! Paul also Christianizes the usual thanksgiving. Thanks are given to the Father, Son and Spirit for enabling the Thessalonians to live in faith, love and hope.

Shine like lights in the world as you hold on the world of life!

The Gospel Matthew 22: 15-21

The Pharisees: Is it Lawful to Pay Taxes to Caesar?

The Pharisees, understanding that Jesus told the preceding parable with them in mind, began to plot against Him. Realizing His popularity with the public, they devised a verbal trap intended to destroy Jesus' credibility regardless of how He answered.

The **Herodian's** were Jews who supported Herod's dynasty and therefore tolerated their Roman overlords better than the common people in Israel did. Although they were on the opposite side of the political and religious spectrum, they joined forces with the Pharisees because both groups saw Jesus as a threat. They chose the question about paying taxes to Caesar – the infamous poll tax – because they believed that no matter how Jesus answered, He would alienate either the Jewish listeners, who hated the tax, or the Romans' who supported the tax.

"Show me the coin." Jesus outsmarts his adversaries. While they intend to lay a trap for Him, they walk into a trap themselves. Jesus is not at all misled by their flattery. When the Pharisees produce the coin at Jesus' request they reveal that despite their abhorrence of graven images they have already compromised their beliefs to the point of carrying the coins around with them. The Pharisees have lost their credibility.

Jesus forces us to look inside our hearts on the church-state issue. It is easy to get lost in the abstractions of the "religion-and-politics" debate.

There is an election coming up in less than three weeks, and for months now we have heard arguments about, which candidate will better represent our interests in matters religious. Jesus, in his response to the Pharisees, cuts through that kind of rhetoric by personalizing the issue. He asks, in effect, "Where do you stand in terms of your own beliefs?"

By producing the coin that Jesus demanded, the Pharisees immediately revealed their own hypocrisy (how could they carry about with them the graven image that they professed to find abhorrent?)

Jesus reduces the debate over religion and politics to a question of priorities.

We might also point to the example of Cyrus (mentioned in today's first reading). He was a political leader who, though not a Jew, became God's instrument in the restoration of Israel. If the people keep faith, it does not matter who is in charge of the political system.

For the Christian believer, there can be but one sovereign.

We celebrate in the Eucharist a God who says, "I am the Lord, and there is no other." Our sharing in this Sacrament is a pledge of allegiance to that God who commands our undivided loyalty.

"The Son of Man has come to give his life as a ransom for many!"

Let's close with Thomas Jefferson's prayer for our nation:

"Almighty God, you have given us this good land as our heritage... Bless our land... Save us from violence... and from every evil way. Defend our liberties... Endow with the Spirit of wisdom those to who in your name we entrust the authority of government..."

In time of prosperity fill our hearts with thankfulness, and in the days of trouble do not allow our trust in you to fail."

Amen.

Sacrament of Reconciliation

By request or appointment

Anointing of the Sick

Celebrated biannually at Mass or individually call for an appointment

For Pregnancy Support:

Birthright 241-8444 or 800-550-4900

MASS INTENTIONS October 17 - 23

Saturday 5:00 p.m. + Irene Ann Miller

Sunday 10:00 a.m. + Dennis Stacey

Tuesday 9:00 a.m. + Jon Kelly

Thursday 9:00 a.m. + Dennis Stacey

Friday 9:00 a.m. + John Schaner

Stewardship of Treasure

Report Sunday October 10 & 11, 2020

Total \$ 1,378.00

Thank you and May God bless you for your generosity!

Women's Club/Prayer Group

We meet the 4th Wednesday of each month,
October 28th from 1 to 2:30 pm.
Our focus is social and spiritual at the same time.

17th Annual Giving at Greenfield

It is a holiday tradition for the Christ Child parish to adopt 38 families from Greenfield community. We will have the family information available after Mass on **Nov. 7-8 and 14/15.**

**Contact Karen if you have question
831.661.5043**

**PRAYER REQUEST can be sent
christchildchurchprayerline@gmail.com**

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION! This year we have to be at HOME with parents, the Parish will be there to help you with material and work.

Terry Burrows Assoc. Dir. of Catechesis.
Please Call 805-458-2006

