

## HOMILY 29<sup>TH</sup> SUN OT YRA 2017

The other day my friend Mike was picking his son up from school. His son asked Mike if they could stop at McDonalds for a snack. Mike said OK. He bought a coke and a large order of fries. They sat down at a table to talk. At one point Mike stretched out his hand to take a fry, but his son pulled them toward himself and covered the fries with his hand. Mike just let it pass, but he wondered if his son had forgotten who bought the fries. Mike wondered if he realized he could buy way more fries than they could eat in a month. Mike thought he just wanted to share a couple of fries with his son. I wonder if we sometimes treat God this way. Everything we have came from God, but we sometimes forget that. In reality we cannot give anything to God since it all came from him. All we can do is to return to God what is already his.

In the Gospel, they ask Jesus if it is lawful to pay the census tax. Jesus asks for a coin and then asks them whose image is on the coin. They replied, Caesar's. Jesus tells them to repay to Caesar what belongs to Caesar and to God what belongs to God. That seems pretty clear at first glance, but is it? Today we know that we have to pay taxes, the IRS will eventually make you pay or put you in prison. We talk about separation of church and state, but is there an absolute separation? I do not think so. Government policy has moral implications. It does not seem as though the government has any moral compass. I rarely hear anybody in politics talking about what is the right thing to do. I think the Church has to be the moral compass; the Church has to be the conscience of the state. Now you may not agree with everything the Church teaches, but I suggest that it is the best thing that we have. It is easy to criticize the Church because the Church is very clear about where it stands on moral issues. I think there is a great deal of wisdom in the Church's teachings, and we must use the Church as our moral compass in

making decisions about how we vote, how we spend our money, the businesses we support, the charities we support. Church teachings should effect what we do in the market place.

It is very clear what we need to pay the government. It IRS makes this very clear. But what do we have to repay to God? Since the denarius has an image of Caesar on it, Jesus tells the people that they need to repay it to Caesar. We were made in the image and likeness of God. The image of God is stamped on each one of us. We need to return our whole selves to God. How do we do that? I think we need to spend time with God. Just like my friend Mike just wanted to spend some time with his son, share a treat with his son. It had nothing to do with the fries for Mike. I think we forget how much God loves us. He created the whole world out of nothing just for us. God is particularly fond of each one of us. He wants us to spend time with him in prayer. He wants to communicate with us. He wants to share his love for us. Do we love God? In order to truly love you have to be free not to love. It is our choice.

What do we need to return to God? We need to support his Church, both financially and in terms of service. The Church is our moral compass. Jesus is the rock that the Church is built upon. I think we need the Church today more than ever. If you like what we are doing here at St. Edith, if you are being nourished here, we need your financial support. Everything we have and do at St. Edith is supported by your dollars. The amount of money you give to the Church is between you and God. I would like everyone to be involved in some way at St. Edith. What you do should match your interests and your skills, any only you can decide that. Look at the volunteer activities we have here at St. Edith and pick what is right for you. Jesus gave us life and sustains us every day. God gave us our skills, talents, abilities, our intellect. They are all gifts from the Holy Spirit, and we need to share them freely with others. So what do you think? Are you going to let Jesus have some of your fries?