Sunday Reading

A Reading from the Gospel of Matthew 22:15–21: Paying Taxes to the Emperor

The Pharisees went off and plotted how they might entrap Jesus in speech. They sent their disciples to him, with the Herodians, saying, “Teacher, we know that you are a truthful man and that you teach the way of God in accordance with the truth. And you are not concerned with anyone’s opinion, for you do not regard a person’s status. Tell us, then, what is your opinion: Is it lawful to pay the census tax to Caesar or not?” Knowing their malice, Jesus said, “Why are you testing me, you hypocrites? Show me the coin that pays the census tax.” Then they handed him the Roman coin. He said to them, “Whose image is this and whose inscription?” They replied, “Caesar’s.” At that he said to them, “Then repay to Caesar what belongs to Caesar and to God what belongs to God.”

Focus Questions

1. What are the Pharisees plotting?
2. What do the Pharisees ask Jesus?
3. What does Jesus call them and why?
4. What does Jesus ask them to show him?
5. Whose image and inscription are on the thing they show him?
6. What does Jesus then say to them?
The Church’s Teaching on Virtuous Citizens

**Directions:** Reread this Sunday’s Gospel (Matthew 22:15–21), and then read the Catechism paragraphs below. Then respond to the essay prompt on the next page in 1-3 paragraphs.

**CCC 2240** Submission to authority and co-responsibility for the common good make it morally obligatory to pay taxes, to exercise the right to vote, and to defend one’s country: Pay to all of them their dues, taxes to whom taxes are due, revenue to whom revenue is due, respect to whom respect is due, honor to whom honor is due. [Christians] reside in their own nations, but as resident aliens. They participate in all things as citizens and endure all things as foreigners.... They obey the established laws and their way of life surpasses the laws.... So noble is the position to which God has assigned them that they are not allowed to desert it.

**CCC 2242** The Apostle exhorts us to offer prayers and thanksgiving for kings and all who exercise authority, “that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life, godly and respectful in every way.” The citizen is obliged in conscience not to follow the directives of civil authorities when they are contrary to the demands of the moral order, to the fundamental rights of persons or the teachings of the Gospel. *Refusing obedience* to civil authorities, when their demands are contrary to those of an upright conscience, finds its justification in the distinction between serving God and serving the political community. “Render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and to God the things that are God’s.” “We must obey God rather than men.”
What do both the Gospel and the Catechism teach us about being virtuous citizens? What are some things we can do to participate in and positively influence our political system?

____________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________