

29th Sunday (A)

- There is a growing chorus in our world telling the Church to be quiet; to stay in its lane; to bless the spiritual things, whisper about heaven, and leave the real world to the powerful.
- Some world leaders praise faith only when it stays polite and invisible.
- Others tolerate the Church as long as it never speaks about justice, human dignity, or the wounds of society.
- And some openly dismiss religious voices as irrelevant, outdated, or inconvenient - criticising the Pope himself when he speaks about peace, human rights, or the dignity of the poor.
- But the Gospel today refuses that silence.
- Years ago, when the Archbishop of Westminster spoke about economic injustice, a business leader snapped that he should "stay out of things he didn't understand."
- That voice has not disappeared; it has grown louder: "Don't speak about politics. Don't speak about economics. Don't speak about human rights. Don't speak about refugees. Don't speak about the poor."
- Yet when the Pope speaks about war, mercy, or the sacredness of human life, some leaders respond with anger, mockery, or accusations - proving how uncomfortable the Gospel becomes when it confronts power.
- But Jesus did speak. Because politics is simply the way we organise our common life; it's not about being partisan, about one party against another.
- And Jesus cared fiercely about human life.
- Some in his day thought he was a Zealot because he defended the poor, confronted corrupt power, and stirred up trouble.
- But Jesus rejected violence, loved his enemies, and taught that justice grows from hearts transformed by love - not fear, not weapons, not revenge. He was not a Zealot.
- He was something far more dangerous: a man who revealed God's dream for humanity.
- Today's Gospel is often used to silence the Church: "*Give to Caesar what belongs to Caesar.*"
- But Jesus does not stop there - "*Give to God what belongs to God.*"
- And what belongs to God? Everything stamped with God's image. Every human being; every human system; every human decision; every human heart.
- This is the prophetic edge of the Gospel: No Caesar owns what God has claimed.
- No government owns the human soul. No leader owns our conscience.
- In our time, some leaders welcome the Church only when it blesses the status quo; others want faith reduced to private comfort.

- Some want religion to be a decorative symbol - safe, silent, and sentimental.
- But the Gospel is not decorative. It is disruptive. It is fire.
- We cannot divide Sunday faith from weekday life.
- When believers keep devotion separate from decisions, history shows how quickly darkness spreads. Silence is not holiness. Silence is complicity.
- Isaiah tells us today that God calls each of us by name.
- That means every voice holds a truth that is worth listening to.
- Every injustice cries out for healing.
- Every human life is a gift entrusted to our care because it is precious in God's eyes.
- And so the Church must speak - sometimes gently, sometimes boldly - about the wounds of the world; not to win arguments, but to defend the dignity God has breathed into every person.
- But if we speak, we must speak in a language people can hear.
- Too often we cling to religious words that once carried fire but now sound dusty.
- People today live in a world of many meaning systems.
- They are not moved by abstract concepts.
- They are moved by what touches the heart: dignity, love, joy, forgiveness, grief, peace.
- Jesus did not come to build a religious vocabulary.
- He came to awaken humanity.
- So yes, give Caesar what is justly his for the sake of the common good.
- But remember your deeper allegiance. You belong to God.
- You bear the divine image. And so does every person you meet.
- That divine spark in others is what we are commanded to honour, protect, and cherish.
- The prophetic call of the Gospel is this: See God in every face. Break down every wall that divides. Refuse to accept any system that crushes the human spirit. And never let fear silence the truth.
- When we liberate the oppressed, we also liberate the oppressor.
- When we honour the divine image in others, we rediscover it in ourselves.
- God's embrace is wide enough for all.
- As God has embraced us, so we must embrace others - with courage, tenderness, and a love that refuses to exclude.
- Give Caesar what is Caesar's. Give God what is God's.
- And remember: you belong to God. So does your neighbour. So does your enemy. So does the world.
- This is the Gospel's prophetic fire. And it is entrusted to us.