

**Again the Pharisees are on the attack**

**But today, not just them**

**They gang up with 2 other groups**

**The Herodians and the Sadducees**

**3 groups diametrically opposed to each other in society and in religious beliefs**

**The Pharisees**

**Those governed by the law**

**Believing the law could and would offer salvation**

**If we keep the law perfectly**

**God owes us salvation**

**The Sadducees**

**They did not believe in an after life**

**This world was all there was to life**

**After you died**

**Nothing**

**And the Herodians**

**These were Jewish citizens that supported the Roman occupiers**

**They turned their back on the Israelite nation**

**To get ahead materially**

**Many of these would be tax collectors or otherwise employed by the government**

**But they come together in our Gospel**

**United in their opposition to Jesus Christ**

**But God will use them to teach an important lesson**

**Just as He has always done**

**In our first reading from Isaiah**

**The Babylonians had captured the Israelite nation**

**They took them into captivity and from Jerusalem**

**Years later, the Babylonians are defeated by the Persians**

**Cyrus became the new ruler**

**God 'anoints' him, something normally reserved for David and his descendants**

**But he is not Jewish**

**He may not even have known God**

**Yet he is chosen by God**

**Given special protection, power and authority**

**He does this so Cyrus can conquer kings and peoples**

***For the sake of Jacob***

**For God's chosen people**

**And Cyrus opens doors that allow the Jewish people to return home**

**God would use unwitting accomplices to teach another lesson as well**

**The three groups come together for one purpose**

**To trip up Jesus**

**The begin with false praise**

**Flattery**

***We know you are a truthful man***

***You are not concerned with anyone's opinion***

**Just the opposite of those trying to entrap him**

**They are not trustworthy**

**And all they care about is the opinion of the crowd**

**They came up with this plan**

**Tell us about the Roman Tax**

**Is it just?**

**Is it lawful?**

**They try to get Jesus into an either / or situation**

**If he says the tax is legit**

**His biggest supporters will turn on him**

**Their main concern was having their land occupied by the Romans**

**They were waiting for a messiah who would free Israel**

**A messiah who would be a return of Davidic power**

**But if he says no to the tax**

**Then those supporting Rome will turn him in as a political traitor**

**Something the Roman authorities would not stand for**

**Denouncing Cesar was punished by death**

**But Jesus does not fall for their false praise**

**Nor does he give into their trap**

**He responds with a question of his own**

***Why are you testing me, you hypocrites?***

***Show me the coin used for the tax***

***Whose image and whose inscription are on the coin?***

**Cesar's**

***Then repay to Cesar what is Cesar's***

***And repay to God what is God's***

**Jesus gives us a new way to look at our world**

**Two things seemingly diametrically opposed to each other**

**Another way for those of Jesus' time to see as us vrs them**

**God's chosen people and the others**

**Again, this shows that Jesus did not come for only a select group**

**He came for the salvation of all**

**All people live under one form of government or another**

**But more fundamentally, all people are made in the image and likeness of God**

**To whom do we owe a higher degree of allegiance?**

**Governments and worldly powers may take everything we have**

**Except what truly matters**

**Our hearts and our souls**

**Why is it that we so like to denigrate our opponents?**

**In all things, right?**

**Business, sports, politics**

**I don't know if there is a sphere of our lives where this doesn't  
come into play**

**At least a little bit**

**We see it especially every election cycle**

**Watching the ads on TV**

**You would think this or that person is the devil incarnate**

**Until the next ad comes on**

**Showing they are really an angel in disguise**

**And their opponent is Satan**

**We can give false praise and adulation**

**Only in order to bring them down a notch or two**

**Because then we can feel a bit better about ourselves**

**But in reality we should pay attention to Jesus' last words**

***Repay to God what belongs to God***

**We are made in the image and likeness of God**

**Our relationships here on earth should reflect this**

**How we treat our families and friends**

**How we treat strangers we encounter**

**How we live our spiritual lives**

**How we handle our money should reflect this**

**How we spend our leisure time should reflect this**

**How we vote should reflect this**

**And ultimately, this has an impact on what we celebrate today**

**World Mission Sunday**

**It is said that the Church does not have a mission**

**The mission of Christ**

**Taking the Gospel to the entire earth**

**This mission has a church**

**It is a mission that goes beyond national borders**

**It is a mission that goes beyond personal prejudices**

**It is a mission we are all called to invest in and support**

**For some, that means physically going to places in need**

**It used to mean going to the far corners of the world**

**While that is still true, it goes beyond that**

**Our own nation is in need**

**In the cities and in our local communities**

**While we now have group leaders for our next Confirmation class**

**Why is it that it took so long?**

**Why is it that we have the same men ushering for a month at a time?**

**Why is it we have such a small group of lectors?**

**Why is it that our CCD program doesn't have a group of teachers in the wings?**

**Why is it that the same people run the fall fest and bazaar year after year?**

**Why is it that getting another body on one of the parish councils is like pulling teeth?**

**Supporting the mission financially is important**

**And we will have a collection for this next week**

**But supporting the mission right here at home is no less important**

**In fact, I would say it is even more important**

**Because a lively, vibrant local community**

**Is the source of a vibrant diocese**

**This is the source of a vibrant Church, of a vibrant mission**

**Around the world**

**And here at home**

***Render unto Cesar what is Cesar's***

***And render unto God what belongs to God***