

Pastoral Reflection
29th Sunday in Ordinary Time
October 22, 2023

Gospel: **Mt 22:15-21**

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."

Ah, the dance of Jesus! In today's gospel the Pharisees wanted so badly to trap Jesus and make him a public humiliation, proving to everyone that he was a fraud. But Jesus easily caught on and foiled the trap they had set for him.

The Pharisees knew well that Jesus was not a rule follower in the sense of fundamentalist orthodox Jews, where the letter of the law needed to be adhered to in order to be of good standing. But in this trap the Pharisees knew that Jesus was not keen on paying the census tax (nor were his followers) as it supported the empire's ongoing oppression. The Pharisees also knew that if he spoke out against paying tribute to Caesar he could get into legal trouble. And of course that's exactly what they were hoping for. On the other hand, if Jesus easily agreed to conform to the onerous rule, by paying the tax, he would appear hypocritical of his mission, a transcendent one rising above earthly politics.

But he cleverly worked around this dilemma. Although his heart was not that of a legalist, emulating a human being (Tiberius Caesar) who was broadly considered to be the "Son of God" (like all Roman emperors since the death of Julius Caesar in 44 BCE), Jesus knew he walked a fine line. So he made the distinction between the realm of Caesar (a humanly devised concept) and the realm of God (the actual Divine).

So when the Pharisees asked him, "Is it lawful to pay the census tax to Caesar or not?" Jesus refused to be caught in their sinister web, putting the onus back on them. Regarding the tax, he replied simply, "repay to Caesar what belongs to Caesar and to God what belongs to God." i.e., What is humanly devised should follow the human-made rules, having no supreme or eternal consequence. But what is ordained by God should be adhered to with all our hearts and all our souls, because the consequence of doing so is for all time.

In Tuesday's *New York Times* there was an article about Javier Milei, a far-right libertarian candidate leading the polls in Argentina's presidential election this month.

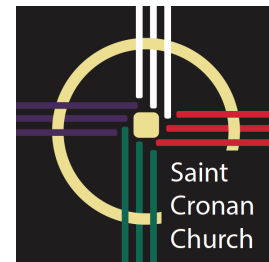
The article reads, "In 2020, Mr. Milei, a self-identifying Catholic, called (fellow Argentinian) Pope Francis an 'imbecile' and 'the representative of the Evil One on earth' because he defends 'social justice.' Last year, Mr. Milei said the pope "always stands on the side of evil" because he supports taxes. And last month, in an interview with the former Fox News host Tucker Carlson, Mr. Milei said the pope "has an affinity for murderous communists" and is violating the Ten Commandments."

I'm not certain what exactly was Milei's point but he seems to follow the self-righteous path of the Pharisees in Jesus' time, by attempting to buttonhole one of the holiest and humblest persons on the planet today. In my mind, Francis faces the same unvarnished scrutiny by someone trying to trap and humiliate him as the Pharisees attempted with Jesus.

So what about the rest of us? What is the moral of the story? What is equivalent to taxes rendered to Caesar? And who is Caesar for us? Perhaps our Caesar is the need to conform to outside appearances that make us look good to others. Perhaps it is giving in to the pressure to go the legalistic route without asking any questions about how our complicit actions harm others, when we might have the option to protest or even do civil disobedience in the holy effort to right laws that are wrong.

We are pressured from every direction to adhere to Caesar's ways, whether it is to pay income taxes that unconditionally support the military or to consume uncritically in a consumer culture that pressures us to want and buy more without considering human or environmental costs. Like Jesus, we need to selectively render unto Caesar the things of this world and give the rest to God.

—Cathy Hartrich



St. Cronan Catholic Church
29th Sunday in Ordinary Time
October 22, 2023

Mass Information

SUNDAY – 8 a.m. and 10 a.m.

SATURDAY VIGIL – 5:00 pm.

Wednesdays – 8:00 am.

Sacrament of Reconciliation by appointment.

Children's Book Collection: If you have any new or used books in good condition suitable for 5-10 year olds, please bring them to church for Dewey Elementary School. Miss Shannon, daughter of Glenn and Pat Eckert is creating a library in her classroom for children who do not have access to books. See the bin in back of church. You can also bring your book donations to the church office.



Black Lives Matter Vigil, takes place the third Friday of the Month at the corner of Manchester and Kingshighway, 5:00 – 6:00 p.m. The next vigil will take place on Friday, November 17. Please join us!

Free Fall Concert Please join us for our second annual fall concert "Carry the Hope" TODAY at St. Joan of Arc Church 3:00pm. Our one-hour program will include vocal and instrumental selections as well as inspirational readings and even the chance for a sing-a-long. Plan to attend and bring a friend. All are welcomed!

Order your Cronan Shirt Today: Cronan Shirts are now available to order online. We have polos, t-shirts, hoodies and more! Order now in time for Christmas. Our on-line store will close on Nov. 6 at 10am sharp, so don't let this opportunity pass...order today! Ordering on-line is very easy, but if you need help, call us in the office and we can help you or order it for you. Visit our website at <https://stcronan.org/> to order or follow the link: <https://store.kickprint.com/StCronan/shop/> home Flyers are in the back of church.



Thank you to our Fundraising Committee for making this possible! Proceeds from all sales benefit St. Cronan.



Prayers Please: Kathy Bayless; Trish Curtis' brother; David Gaillardetz' father, Richard who has entered hospice; Nick and Shirley Ambrose's daughter, Brigid Costello; Varrietta Anthony; Fr. Jack's brother, Mike; Diane Calcaterra; Barb Sopp's friend, Joe Sinibaldi; Bob Barnicle; Paul Schmitt; Tim and Else Hirzel's great nephew, Cameron Russell; Kathy Hunn's niece, Lisa; Sr. Cathy's friends, Inga Casillo, Don Costello, and newborn baby, Giovanni Christopher Centerino; Judy Gallagher; Mary Truetkin; Marie and Roland Martir's daughter, Carrie, and granddaughter, Madi; John Gozdziński; Michael Mason, former SVDP hauler; Michael Peterson; Linda and Jeff Caul's daughter, Kelly; Joe Connolly; Sam Vitale, friend of Father Jack and Mary Ward; John Derr, son-in-law of Alice Adcock; Bill Blow's daughter, Meg Shugarts; Roger Bailey, friend of Dom and Marcy Soda; Philip Anala; Bonnie Wimmer; Jon Ebner, nephew of Rocky Sieben and Ruth Hasser; the Krueger family; Nick Ambrose; Betty Newberry; Marty Spies; Judith Santamaria; Nick Ambrose's friend, John; Tom Farace, Brother-in-law of Mary and Dave Solomon; Theresa Jones, sister of Dave Solomon; Gary Johnson, brother-in-law to Madonna and Tom Kuciejczyk-Kernan and Sr. Janet Kuciejczyk; Janice Fairless; Leslie Conway; Mary Middendorf, Barry Buchek's friend, Alan Zagurski; Barry Buchek; Dede Coughlin; Fr. George; Madonna Kuciejczyk-Kernan. *If your loved one should be removed from the prayer list, please let the church office know.*

Else Hirzel, beloved wife of Tim, passed away last week. Please keep her family in your prayers.



All Saints/All Souls Celebration: A "Memorial Wall" is located in the vestibule of church, that invites you to place the names of your loved ones whom you would like us to honor during the month of November. The "Table of Saints" will join the Wall the last weekend of October and remain in place throughout November. You can place pictures of close relatives and friends on the table. The weekend of **November 4-5**, we will celebrate those close relatives and friends who have passed on within the last year (November-November). If you have lost someone close that you would like to memorialize during the candle-lighting ceremony, please contact Diane – diane@stcronan.org – by November 1. Your loved one's name will be read and a candle lit in their honor.

Parish Ministries: If you would like to add your talents to any of our ministries, and meet a great bunch of people, please call the church office or visit our website www.stcronan.org for information. *You are always welcome!*



The November Ministry of the Month is the Food Pantry: The Food Pantry has approximately 30 volunteers who do several tasks. They shop the food, shelf the food, bag the food for our families, carry the food to the clients cars, and all with the biggest, warmest smiles on their faces. We treat the clients with the respect they deserve and need. The food pantry is making a difference one client at a time. The Food Pantry Director is: Mary Solomon. Please contact Mary with any questions, or if you are interested in helping or donating. solo40ba-by@yahoo.com

Advent Reflection Book: It's that time again! The Advent Reflection Book Calendar will be in the back of church this weekend. Please take a post-it note that contains the readings of the day and write your name and contact information in the calendar square. We are not having an online calendar this year, because I wasn't savvy enough to keep up with it, but if you would like to write a reflection for a specific date and cannot make it to church, call or email Diane at diane@stcronan.org or (314) 289-9384 and I will add you to the calendar.



Thank you, Fr. Jack, Diane, Mary, Maggie, Bob, and all who helped, brought food, and gathered for the wonderful celebration on Sunday honoring my tenure as Food Pantry Director. I am so grateful for the opportunity to be a part of this community in supporting our neighbors and sharing this ministry with all of the volunteers who have served along side me for all these years. It's been my profound pleasure to be a part of this and am thrilled that Mary Solomon has stepped up to take over allowing me to step back! Terry and I were stunned by the generous gift of airline passes to visit Adam in San Diego. We will be opening the bottle of wine at Thanksgiving; just seemed to be appropriate. Thank you for always walking with our family through all the ups and downs of life; you are our community and we feel incredibly blessed to call you friends and family!

—Kathy, Terry and Adam Hunn

Parish Center Offices

Mon-Fri 9am-3pm
Phone: (314) 289-9384

Pastor: Fr. Jack Schuler

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Music Director: David Dickey

Food Pantry Director: Mary Solomon
(314) 533-0651

Bulletin Deadline: Wed 12 noon

