

A Coffee with Alessio



29th Sunday in Ordinary Time – Year A

Lectionary:

First Reading: Isaiah 45:1,4-6

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 95(96):1,3-5,7-10

Second Reading: 1 Thessalonians

Gospel: Matthew 22:15-21

The Gospel Reading this Sunday illustrates so well what so many of us struggle with – faith versus the world. The problem is that many of us try to reconcile the world with our faith, instead of our faith with the world. Now, I can hear some people saying – what’s the difference, it’s just the order of the words swapped around – and that is exactly the point. If our faith is the prime priority of our life every day, then our task is to witness to Christ through our faith and make Him known in the world, what I have described in other columns as a living homily. If the world is our first priority, then we try to change our faith to suit the needs of the world. That is where we have run into so many problems and is one of the chief reasons secularism is a dominant force in our society.

At the end of the Gospel Reading this Sunday Jesus says:

‘Very well, give back to Caesar what belongs to Caesar – and to God what belongs to God.’

If we live out our faith and engage with the world through our faith, we can serve God and neighbour, and God and government also. This year, we have probably seen this Gospel Reading come to the fore in a new way during the lockdown. Where we couldn’t gather publicly for worship, the virtual Church came to the fore to keep in touch with people all over the world. You might recall that the Good Friday liturgy and Easter Sunday morning Mass were televised from Saint Mary’s Cathedral in Sydney.

If we are truly going to be Catholic then the ritual needs to combine with good works and we must also fulfill our civic duties and combine all three aspects mentioned and do them well. Civic duties include voting responsibly at elections and taking that responsibility seriously.

Musicwise this Sunday, a couple of suggestions come to mind: "Be Thou My Vision", and "Christ is the World's Light". "In faith and hope and love" ties in beautifully with the Second Reading. These hymns are what I would call my traditional suggestions. On a contemporary perspective, "I have loved you" and "You are mine" are two possibilities.

One of the schools I taught in has for its motto "Pro Deo et Patria", translated as "For God and Country". This motto summarizes the readings we will hear this Sunday. If we take this motto on board, our lives as Christians will flourish and we truly will witness to Christ in the world and evangelize in ways that only the Lord knows how. In this way, we can join with the Psalmist this Sunday and proclaim: Give the Lord glory and honour!

Just to give you the heads up, the Solemnity of All Saints (1 November) will take place in two Sundays' time. I'll say more about that in the next two columns. However, two hymn suggestions that come to mind are "For all the Saints" and "I'll sing a song of the Saints of God".

Speaking of evangelizing and engaging our faith with the world – it's time to mention a café. I found a couple of new places during the break. This week's "new place" is General Public, which is on the corner of Beaufort Street and Ninth Avenue. It has had several incarnations previously. Yes, they are opening till quite late and you can drop in for a coffee any time. They have a few delectable delights which I am yet to try, but their Banana Bread is worth dropping in for and washing down with a coffee. Even our interactions in the café can be a way of serving God and country.

Till next week - enjoy your coffee and cake!

Mr Alessio Loiacono
Music Field Officer

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