

**SHARING THE FAITH: WEEKLY EMAIL DEVOTION
FOR THE WEEK ENDING JULY 4, 2010**

Readings for July 4, 2010, Sixth Sunday after Pentecost:

LUKE 20:20-26

20 So they watched him and sent spies who pretended to be honest, in order to trap him by what he said, so as to hand him over to the jurisdiction and authority of the governor. ²¹So they asked him, 'Teacher, we know that you are right in what you say and teach, and you show deference to no one, but teach the way of God in accordance with truth. ²²Is it lawful for us to pay taxes to the emperor, or not?' ²³But he perceived their craftiness and said to them, ²⁴'Show me a denarius. Whose head and whose title does it bear?' They said, 'The emperor's.' ²⁵He said to them, 'Then give to the emperor the things that are the emperor's, and to God the things that are God's.' ²⁶And they were not able in the presence of the people to trap him by what he said; and being amazed by his answer, they became silent.

Faith Questions:

1. This Sunday is the 4th of July. What is the connection in your life between being an American citizen and being a Christian? In your opinion, can serving your country also be a part of serving God? In what ways?
2. What do you think Jesus meant when he said, "Give to the emperor the things that are the emperor's, and to God the things that are God's" (verse 25)? What things belong to the emperor? What things belong to God?
3. Jesus seems to be telling his listeners to fulfill their obligations to their country in addition to their obligations to God. But, what happens when the will of the government is not in line with where we as Christians believe God would have us go? Martin Luther King, Jr. is a good example of someone in American history who went in the direction he believed God was leading him, even though it was against his country's current ideals. How do you believe the actions of MLK might fit with the message Jesus has for his listeners in this text? Do they support or contradict each other? Why or why not?
4. This text also contains a message about how, why, and what we give to God. What message do you hear in this passage about your own giving habits? Why do you give to God? In what ways do you give to God?
5. What does Jesus say in this text that fits with your daily life and experiences? How can you live into that message out in the world?

Let us pray:

Lord, thanks for the blessings of this country and our leaders. We pray for them, that you would bless them. Help us to be good citizens, and help the ways in which we live out our citizenship to also reflect our calling to be Christians in this world.

For whom else, and for what else, shall we pray? (Insert your own prayer here)
Amen.

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Devotion prepared by staff at Trinity Lutheran Church, Lansdale, Pennsylvania, under the direction of Rebecca Kolowé, Diaconal Minister.

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