

Twenty-Ninth Sunday Ordinary Time

† Sunday, 18 October 2020

World Mission Day – In England and Wales prayer in support of Evangelisation



In England and Wales Cycle of Prayer: For the spread of the Gospel

Keynote: God's chosen

Prophet Isaiah 45:1, 4-6

The prophet addresses the foreign Babylonian King Cyrus, chosen by the Lord God to restore the exiled People of Israel and lead them back to Jerusalem *'It is for the sake of my servant Jacob, of Israel, my chosen one, that I have called you by your name, conferring a title though you do not know me.'*

Thus, King Cyrus is empowered by God *'to subdue nations before him... to force gateways before him.'* God gives Cyrus this commission for a purpose, *'though you do not know me, I arm you that men may know from the rising to the setting of the sun that, apart from me, all is nothing.'*

Responsorial Psalm 95 [96] – A song praising God on behalf of all creation

First Letter of Paul to the Thessalonians 1:1-5

This letter is likely to be the earliest extant Christian document in the New Testament. With its opening greeting, this personal letter is typical of Hellenistic letters of the time. *'From Paul, Silvanus and Timothy, to the Church in Thessalonica,'* writes the apostle, *'(the Church) which is in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ; wishing you grace and peace.'* Then with directness, Paul writes, *'We always mention you in our prayers and thank God for you all... we know brothers, that God loves you and that you have been chosen, because we brought the Good News to you, it came to you not only as words but as power and as the Holy Spirit and as utter conviction.'*

Do we value and appreciate this wonderful gift of the good news which has been handed to us?

Gospel according to Matthew 22:15-21

The evangelist presents us today with the first of four debates between Jesus and the Jewish leaders – the Pharisees, the Herodians and the Sadducees. The Jewish leaders, normally argued bitterly among themselves, but here significantly they join together to entrap Jesus. With a lawyer's smooth manner the question is asked, *'Master, we know you are an honest man and teach the way of God in an honest way, and that you are not afraid of anyone, because a man's rank means nothing to you. Tell us your opinion, then. Is it permissible to pay taxes to Caesar or not?'*

The compliment is a fine one; the words hide the underlying guile.

For Jesus is being invited, either to incur the wrath of the occupying Roman Imperial authority, or to distance himself from popular local Jewish nationalistic feelings. *'But Jesus was aware of their malice and replied, "You hypocrites! Why do you set this trap for me? Let me see the money you pay the tax with... whose head is this? Whose name?" "Caesar's" they replied. He then said to them, "Very well, give back to Caesar what belongs to Caesar – and to God what belongs to God."*

Even the lawyers were confounded by this simple answer! There is a lesson here for us too!

Note

World Mission Day – Mass may be said For the Evangelisation of Peoples

Refer Roman Missal.

© Peter J Harrison 2020