

## **STEWARDSHIP RENEWAL – LIVING IN MISSION**

**22 October 2017** [29<sup>th</sup> Sun. A Stewardship 2]

It is a definite setup. The religious authorities ask a seemingly simple question to Jesus, inquiring if it is lawful to pay taxes to Caesar (Matthew 22:15-21). Jesus could be in trouble either way he answers the question. If he says paying taxes to Caesar is wrong, he is in trouble with the government. If he says paying taxes is right, he is in trouble with the Jewish people who hate the government for occupying their land.

So what does Jesus do? He refuses to take sides and says to give to the government what is due to the government and give to God what is due to God. Jesus is telling us to be accountable to God and to others. Be accountable in your worldly life and in your spiritual life. Do not pit one against the other.

The fact is, our lives of faith are lived with God in the real world. We do not live in some kind of bubble, isolating our faith lives from what is going on in the everyday world. Last week, as part of our parish's stewardship renewal, we were reminded that following Jesus means matching our presence at Mass with hearts clothed with generous love. We see this week that living the mission of Jesus in the world means that we are to be accountable to God and to each other.

Our accountability encompasses being accountable to the people that we know. These include our families, friends, co-workers, neighbors, classmates, parishioners, business and professional relationships and more. We are also accountable to people that we do not personally know. Our behaviors and decisions have an effect on people that we have never met. Accountability means keeping in mind the long range effects of our actions on others.

Living the mission of Jesus is rooted in our belief that all that we have and all that we are belongs to God. We therefore are ultimately accountable to God for how we care for, use and share what has been entrusted to us. We live in this world with God and each other. These stewardship renewal weeks invite us to consider our accountability to both. Such dual accountability will lead us to transformed lives and a world made new.

Together in faith,  
Very Rev. Christopher Smith, Rector