

realpeople

the gospel in everyday language



In today's readings:

Apart from me, all is nothing, says the Lord. Is 45:1,4-6
St Paul expresses prayerful gratitude. 1 Thess 1:1-5
Give to God what belongs to God. Mt 22:15-21

Next week: Laws of love.

Ex 22:20-26; 1 Thes 1:5-10;
Mt 22:34-40

In a nutshell

Against the backdrop of taxation laws, Jesus' questioners attempt to trap him by pitting religiosity against politics. Jesus refuses to become embroiled in their games. Instead he states a principle: surely allegiance to God is as important as a concern about taxation laws! Application of the principle is left to his listeners' consciences.



In today's Gospel the words of Jesus cut through petty politics to the fundamentals of life.

Ian, a sporty eighteen year old, was asked to reflect on this theme:

Fundamentals...

Being a sports fanatic, I tend to interpret Jesus' words as I would a good coach. The message is the same in any sport you play: Don't let the complexities of the game phase you. Get the basics right; the rest will follow.

Last season's touch football competition proved to be a challenge to our team. We were upgraded to a higher level than usual and found ourselves playing some really professional outfits who dazzled us with their speed, cut-out passes, inside balls and running angles.

In retaliation, our team started to try some of these moves ourselves, although we had little training in them. It was a disaster. Soon stupid mistakes were creeping into our game, all because we were trying to mimic the other sides and be instant heroes instead of sticking to

what we knew.

It was the guy who we had labelled 'water boy' that set us straight: 'You can't score a try without the football. Get back to basics. If you hold the ball and keep possession the other other team can't score.' Our performance improved dramatically. (I.G.)

...and fundamentals

Karl Rahner SJ was one of the great Catholic theologians of the 20th century. Although often associated with highly speculative theology, Rahner never lost sight of the fundamentals of living faith in the everyday, including the value of simple devotional prayers like the rosary.

One day he heard a young scholar argue that we should stop praying because our inadequate theology seems to turn God into an idol. Rahner replied that if we waited for theology to solve all problems we would never pray. Whatever theological questions remained unresolved, he certainly intended to say his prayers that evening!

In what area of your life do you need to 'get back to basics'?

Life in perspective

A wise grandmother's comment about the aging process: 'Getting old is learning to "give back to God", bit by bit.'

Think . Talk

Think about the deep Christian foundations upon which you base your life.
Who helped you to develop these foundations?



church below the rooftops

Life in perspective

'Our children are only on loan to us - we're just looking after them for God.' This young mother's comment displays a profound wisdom. Her second child has just been born with a number of serious medical problems. Her first child was also born with life threatening disabilities. Incredibly, the two situations are medically and genetically unrelated.

As they immerse their children in love, this young woman and her husband live with the knowledge that they may have their children with them for twenty years - or two. Such is the uncertainty of the situation, a suffering which has taught them that true parental love cannot be possessive or manipulative. Ultimately our children are not our own - each is a gift which comes from God and returns to God. (VC)



RealPeople offers faith reflections from the saints and prophets of everyday life.

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