

## RENDER UNTO CAESAR ...

**T**his Sunday's Gospel deals with the controversial question of how Christians consider themselves in relation to both the authority of the Church and of the state. Indeed, this scripture passage is a relevant today as it ever was, for it contains the origins of the sense of the separation of Church and State we hold in the present day. In the Gospel, a question is put to Jesus which asks whether it is legitimate for Jews to pay taxes to the occupying Roman State, and its leader, Caesar. It is important to note, however, that the main point of the question is not to have Jesus give an instruction on this matter. Its object is more overtly political: at this point in the Gospel, Jesus has entered Jerusalem, and has been proclaimed as its messianic king. He is therefore locked in a power struggle with those groups which carry local authority in the city, under the overall control of the occupying Romans. Those groups see Jesus as a threat to their power bases, and therefore want to portray him as dangerous to the Romans, and also to discredit him in the eyes of the Jewish communities.

The tax question is a clever one, and well effects these ends. It comes together from two parties to the alliance which opposes Jesus: the Pharisees, who generally would be hostile to paying taxes to Rome, and the Herodians, the collaborators and instruments of the Roman occupation. Jesus appears to be stuck in a Catch-22 situation—if he supports the payment of the highly unpopular poll tax, he will lose standing with the people; if he decries the payment, he may be identified with the Zealot insurgents, and therefore bad for law and order.

Jesus's 'Render unto Caesar' instruction throws back the dilemma to the court of the other parties. Jesus introduces the relation to God into the matrix, which neither party had done. They had set the issue simply in terms of obligation to Rome, and not in terms of higher things, even though they claimed to be religious authorities. What Jesus does is indicate responsibilities and obligations to the civil power, but locates this responsibility within the broader and higher framework of obedience to God. He certainly distances himself from the Zealot fundamentalism when tended to theocracy. Further, Jesus's followers would hope for a peaceful existence within the Roman empire, so long as their faith in Christ and Rule of God were not impinged upon. We see here the makings of a principle which deals with the separation of Church and State, which underscores that believers have responsibilities in both realms, and which obliges our consciences to make discerned decisions. For us today, this is no less true: it is too simple to choose one authority in favour of another — we are always called to exercise our consciences judiciously, taking a keen interest in matters of State, while remaining attentive to what is distinctively Christian in our way of living.

*Fr Philip*



## FISHER HOUSE NEWSLETTER

Sunday 22 October: 29th Sunday of the Year

### CALENDAR: WEEK III OF TERM

Sunday 22	<b>29th SUNDAY OF THE YEAR</b> 9.00 Sung Latin Mass 11.00 Sung English Mass
Monday 23	1.05 Mass
Tuesday 24	1.05 Mass
Wednesday 25	1.05 Mass 12.30 <i>Exposition of Blessed Sacrament</i>
Thursday 26	1.05 Mass <i>Sts Chad and Cedd</i>
Friday 27	1.05 Mass 7.30 <i>Exposition, Evening Prayer &amp; Reflection</i>
Saturday 28	1.05 Mass <i>Sts Simon and Jude</i> 4.30 - 5.30 <i>Confessions</i> 6.00 Vigil Mass of Sunday
Sunday 29	<b>30th SUNDAY OF THE YEAR</b> 9.00 Sung Latin Mass 11.00 Sung English Mass

MONS. MARK LANGHAM : SR ANN SWAILES OP : FR PHILIP MOLLER SJ

## EVENING PRAYER

At 7.30pm on Fridays, and exposition - the perfect moment to end the week at this busy time.

## CAROLINE DIVINE READING GROUP



On Mondays at 8.00pm in the Great Chamber, we discuss Thomas Traherne's *Centuries of Devotion* Written privately for a friend, it is a handbook of meditation and instructions. It has been called a *divine and a human love story*. Wine and viol music provided.

## CAFOD

The CAFOD group meets on Sundays at 12.15pm in the Library for 45 minutes to discuss Pope Francis' teaching on the Care of Creation. This week we are looking at CAFOD's experience battling the elements around the world. All are welcome to join us.

## DAILY LUNCH

Lunch is provided each day in the Fisher Room, priced an incredible £1.50, from 1.00pm.

## TUESDAY TALKS: APOLOGIA

This week, Gregory Jackson will speak on *How to approach the abortion conversation*. All welcome. Dinner at 7.00pm, talk at 7.45pm..

## MINISTERS AND READERS

We are looking for new Ministers of the Eucharist, and Readers, for all Masses. Please sign up, or let Sr Ann (acs92) or Fr Mark (ml709) know if you are interested.

## TALK AT MARGARET BEAUFORT INSTITUTE

*Proliferating Virtues: A Clear and Present Danger?* A talk by Prof Nancy E. Snow of the The University of Oklahoma. Response by Dr Nicholas Austin SJ (Heythrop College). At the Margaret Beaufort Institute of Theology, 12 Grange Rd. Friday 27 October, 5.00pm

## BLACK SWAN BAR

Fisher House's own bar is open every Friday night after Vespers at 8.30pm. Come along for a great selection of beers and spirits. You won't find better prices anywhere!

## SR ANN'S OPEN OFFICE

Drop in for tea, cake, conversation. Friday afternoons, anytime between 3.00pm and 5.00pm.



## CAMBRIDGE CHURCHES' HOMELESS PROJECT

As in previous years, Stephen Barwise will speak after 9.00am and 11.00am Masses today about this charity which provides relief to the homeless over the winter months.

## HOLY UNEXPECTED

On Monday, at 7.30pm in the Fisher Room, we will show a film of encounter with eight figures of holiness, including G.K. Chesterton and Mother Julian of Norwich. The human face of these people provides encouragement and inspiration for facing the unexpected in our own lives.



## DAYLIGHT SAVINGS

Remember that clocks go back an hour NEXT WEEKEND.

## REGISTRATION

We are registering all your cards for access to the Fisher Room and Library. This has to be done by hand, and takes time - so be patient! If you haven't already registered, please fill in one of the forms outside the chapel.

## EXPOSITION OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

As well as Wednesday at 12.30pm, Exposition will now also take place on Fridays from 7.30pm - 8.30pm, and will include Vespers and a Reflection.

## THE MUSLIM FAITH

On Thursday at 7.30pm, in the Fisher Room, Dr Timothy Winter, Dean of the Cambridge Muslim College and Shaykh Zayed Lecturer in Islamic Studies at the University of Cambridge, and a convert to Islam himself, will speak about the Muslim faith and answer questions. All are welcome.

## FILM CLUB

On Sunday nights, we continue with our showing of Granada TV's *Brideshead Revisited*. 8.00pm in the Fisher Room

## SAINTS AND SINNERS

The *Saints and Sinners* party will take place on Friday 27



October in the Black Swan Bar. Come dressed as your favourite saint ... or, indeed, sinner. A prize for the best costume

## COLLECTION LAST WEEK

£374.82

Thank you!