

TWENTY-SECOND SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

(Matthew 22:15-21)

(*Poem*, Vol. 5, pp. 430-1; *Gospel* Vol. 9, p. 400;
Azariah (1993) pp. 292-3, (2007) p. 304)

(It is Tuesday morning of Passion Week. Jesus and His apostles go into the Temple of Jerusalem...)

The soldiers of the Antonia watch them pass by. They go to worship the Lord, then they go back to the court where the rabbis teach.

Before people gather and crowd round Jesus, some saphorim, doctors of Israel, and Herodians approach Him. And with false homage (after greeting Him), they say: 'Master, we know that You are wise and truthful, that You teach the ways of God without taking into consideration any person or thing - except truth and justice - that You do not mind what people think of You, and that You take care only to lead men to Goodness. So tell us: is it lawful to pay the tribute to Caesar, or is it not lawful to do so? What do You think?'

Jesus casts one of His glances of piercing and solemn shrewdness at them, and He replies: 'Why are you tempting Me, hypocritically? And yet some of you know that I am not deceived by hypocritical honours! But show Me a coin, one of those used for the tribute.'

They show Him a coin. He looks at both sides of it, and holding it in the palm of His left hand, He strikes it with the forefinger of His right hand, saying: 'Whose image is this, and what does this inscription say?'

'The image is Caesar's, and the inscription bears his name: the name of Caius Tiberius Caesar, who is now the emperor of Rome.'

And Jesus says: 'Then give back to Caesar what belongs to Caesar, and give to God what belongs to God.' And He turns His back on them, after returning the coin to the man who had given it to Him...

(Maria Valtorta is being subjected to hostility in regard to some of her writings. Azariah -Maria's Guardian Angel- has some words of consolation for her and some words of justice for her persecutors:)

'Our Most Holy Lord... has come to console and reaffirm you, poor soul that is being shaken mercilessly, in order to bend you to saying what is not true...

I remind you of the Master's words: 'Give to Caesar what is Caesar's, and to God what is God's.' A tax was referred to there; a work is referred to here. But in both cases, what belongs to God should always be given to God. Even if, by insisting on wanting the supernatural origin of the work recognized, you succeeded in having no one be further concerned with it - I am speaking of priests - let them act.

They will have to answer to God for three things: not having recognized the Word; having scandalized many souls; and having sinned against charity - towards you, and also towards those hungry for the Word, for whom Jesus Most Holy - having mercy on them - dictated the Work.

In wanting to do what God wills, you have acted on your own, even though you are prevented from acting. In the eyes of God, you have complied, as both a spokeswoman and in carrying out God's orders. And that must suffice for you. God will attend to the rest, and the others. Oh, what words in the Gospel can be applied to this case!

The little ones, who serve the Lord with simplicity and love, are always blessed. And woe, always, to those who - by their way of acting, opposed to the goodness of the Lord - heap up the rigors of Justice upon their heads!...