The 29th Sunday in Ordinary Time - Year A – 10/18/26 – Msgr. Peter Quang Nguyen

First Reading – Isaiah 45:1, 4-6: The LORD empowers Cyrus for Israel's sake. Even though Cyrus doesn't recognize the LORD, God uses him to show there's no other God besides Him.

Responsorial Psalm – Psalm 96: All lands should sing to the LORD and share his marvelous deeds. He surpasses all gods and created the heavens. All nations should honor him, and recognize his just rule.

Second Reading – 1 Thessalonians 1:1-5B: Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy greet the Thessalonians, offering thanks for their faith, love, and hope. They emphasize the gospel's powerful delivery, beyond just words, through the Holy Spirit.

Gospel – Matthew 22:15-21: The Pharisees tried to trap Jesus with a question about taxes to Caesar. Jesus, seeing through their intent, responded wisely, indicating to give Caesar his due and God what's His.

My Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

This week, Sunday, October 18, 2026, our parish community participates with

- The Holy Mother Church celebrates: **The Mission Sunday** throughout the world.
- The Archdiocese of Denver contemplates the faithful to know, to understand the ballots of voting according to our conscience of based on the Church's Social Teaching in the coming weeks.
- Our parish, All Saints Catholic Church, each one of us prays and commits ourselves in exercising and sharing our stewardship in prayer, time, talent, treasure.

When we think about our growth as a Christian, what is the goal? How do we know we're getting there? We might say: going to Mass, knowing the faith, praying more, being a good person. And all of those things matter. **But what are they ultimately preparing us for?** There is a wisdom saying put it this way: *"In imitation of Christ, martyrdom is the pattern for fulfillment as a disciple of Jesus, and so preparation for this heroic witness is the measure for Christian formation."*

Martyrdom comes from a Greek word meaning "to give witness." We usually think of martyrdom as someone being killed for the faith—and that certainly is martyrdom. But every Christian is called to give heroic witness to Christ. We are being formed not simply to be nicer people or to know more about our faith, but to give our lives to Jesus Christ.

This is what we see in the Christians of Thessalonica in our second reading. Paul arrived there and preached that Jesus was the Messiah, the true Lord of the world. Some people believed, and within weeks they were already facing persecution. In Acts 17, we are told that their opponents make the accusation that these Christians of Thessalonica are *"turning the world upside down."* Why? Because they were saying that Jesus is Lord.

That is the heart of what we hear in the Gospel today. The Pharisees and Herodians ask Jesus whether it is lawful to pay the census tax to Caesar. Jesus asks for a coin, points out Caesar's image, and says, *"Repay to Caesar what belongs to Caesar and to God what belongs to God."* This is about much more than taxes. Caesar claimed to be lord. Caesar claimed the title "son of god." And Christians were proclaiming something radically different: Jesus is Lord. Jesus is the true Son of God.

So, what does Jesus want from us? Not simply our money. Not merely an hour on Sunday. He wants what belongs to God: us. Our life. Our heart. Our decisions. Our priorities. Jesus calls us to ***metanoia***—a change of mind, a new way of seeing—and to faith: to entrust ourselves completely to Jesus.

That is what happened in Thessalonica. These Christians came to believe that Jesus was truly Lord, and therefore their lives could no longer be organized around the values of the world—power, status, wealth, comfort, or approval. Their lives belonged to Christ. And that kind of faith turned the world upside down.

The same question comes to us: Have I really given my life to Christ? It is possible to be Catholic for years without ever really making that response. We can go to Mass, know our prayers, practice our religion, and yet still have our lives fundamentally organized around something else. But the Christian life is not simply about becoming a slightly better version of ourselves. It is about giving ourselves to Jesus Christ, our Lord and God.

And when we actually do that, people notice. We may begin to make different choices. We may refuse things that everyone else considers normal. We may prioritize prayer, family, sacrifice, generosity, chastity, forgiveness, or Sunday worship when those things come at a cost. And sometimes people will not understand. We should not be surprised.

The Thessalonians were persecuted because their faith actually changed the way they lived. The martyrs gave their lives because their faith actually meant something. Their witness was powerful precisely because it cost them something. That is what Christian formation is ultimately preparing us for: **not merely to know about Christ, but to belong to Christ so completely that our lives become a witness to him.**

And notice how Paul describes the Thessalonians at the beginning of his letter. He speaks of their *"work of faith and labor of love and endurance in hope."* Faith, love, hope. That is the Christian life.

So perhaps the question is not simply, "Am I a good Christian?" The deeper question is: If following Jesus cost me something, would I still follow him? Because Jesus does not ask for part of our life. He says, "Repay to God what belongs to God." And what belongs to God? Each of Us. Our whole life.

At every Mass, we are reminded of this. We are the ones who have been called to the Supper of the Lamb. God has called us, invited us, chosen us. And our response to that call is meant to be more than words. It is meant to be our whole life.

And when we give our life to Christ, we become witnesses—people whose faith is not merely something they profess, but something they live. And that kind of witness still has the power to turn the world upside down.

- **Witness of the Mission of the Church:** Being an active member of the Body of Christ to participate into the care, nourish, healing of other members of the Church and of the world.
- **Witness of the Church Social Teaching:** Voting and cast our ballots with the informed conscience for the greater good of our society. Choose the lesser evil propositions and leaders (Yes on #133, #134, #135). There are materials available for us to take home to read and to vote.
- **Witness of the Stewardship of our All Saints Parish:** Participate and contribute our share in prayer, time, talent, treasure with the spirit of Faith, Love, and Hope. There are commitment cards available for us to pray and to decide in the coming weeks for us and our families.

Proposition 133: Penalties for Human Trafficking of a Minor: **"Children are not for Sale Act"** That we have responsibilities in civic life ("Give Caesar what is Caesar's"), including paying taxes, but the state's authority has limits. A coin bears Caesar's image; every child bears the image of God. Every child is loved immeasurably by God and has inherent worth. No human person can be treated as property or brought and sold; that would be a gross violation of human didnity and the sanctity of life. People are more important than possessions, and the measure of every institution is whether it threatens or enhances the life and dignity of the human person. **It is imperative that Coloradans strengthen laws that reject the modern slavery of sex trafficking of children. Vote YES on Proposition 133.**

Proposition 134: Male and Female Participation in School Sports: **"Protect Girls' Sports Act"** That we will require all school athletic teams to be designated as male, female or co-ed according to biological sex. **This will be enforced through the athlete's birth certificate. Vote YES on Proposition 134.**

Proposition 135: Prohibit Certain Surgeries on Minors: **" Protect Kids from Irreversible Sex-Rejecting Surgeries Act"** That we will prohibit healthcare providers from performing irreversible sex-rejecting surgeries on minors under the age of 18 for the explicit purpose of changing their biological sex. **Vote YES on Proposition 135.**

We sincerely invite you to inform your conscience, as I do mine, in preparation for your vote for your elected representatives by consulting our voter guide and candidate survey. You may find both here: **www.cocatholic.org/2026-voter-guide.**May the Lord our God be with us and strengthen each of us with His Holy Spirit and help each of us be ***A Martyr – a living witness of Jesus Christ in our daily lives – in our family, our parish, our society, our Mother Church with Faith, Love and Hope.*** May the Lord our God bless us and keep us.