

**God's Dominion over Human Life**      Twenty-ninth Sunday in Ordinary Time/A  
October 22, 2017      10:00 AM      Is 45:1, 4-6; 1 Thes 1:1-5b      **Mt 22:15-21**      (In the Book of Genesis God gave Adam and Eve dominion over the earth and the birds of the air, the cattle, and the fishes of the sea, but not over themselves.)

**“Repay to Caesar what belongs to Caesar and to God what belongs to God.”**

This is really not a new topic and it's the same topic that has been broached the last several weeks. It is about the reign of God, **the kingdom of God**. For the Jewish leaders the kingdom of God was an earthly realm with borders. For Jesus, no, **it was not an earthly realm with borders**, and therefore its citizens can hold dual citizenship both in the kingdom of God and the Roman Empire or the United States of America or any other country.

But then it is necessary to consider: **what really does belong to God, versus what really does belong to Caesar?** Taxes and laws need to be fair and just, but they are not products of God's word, and they are not actually essential to the workings of God's kingdom. Even believers will dispute the wisdom and practicality of this or that institution. What really does matter, however, is what belongs to God. Initially you might say, well, everything. Well, yes, on one level, true, **the whole creation belongs to God**.

**But in a very special way human life belongs to God, because only human life is made in the image and likeness of God equipped with the power of free thought and action.**

Therefore when you hear people say, as you have, as I have as well, “It's my life,” they are not speaking the truth. **My life is not mine; it is God's**. And although chance does play a part in how creation develops, we call this evolution, the creation is a deliberate work of God. Therefore **human life in the womb is not the possession of the mother; it is the possession of God**. The lives of criminals, even justly imprisoned, do not belong to the state; they belong to God. Nor can the meaning and value of human life be measured by how pleasurable, exciting, or influential it happens to be. Human significance does not arise by heroic acts, however edifying such as those of *Doctors without Borders*, or by grand enterprises like the *Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation*, however commendable some of their works are. **Human significance is built-in to every single human person fashioned, again, by God in his image and likeness.**

**In the Book of Genesis God gave Adam and Eve dominion over the earth and the birds of the air, the cattle, and the fishes of the sea, but not over themselves.** God maintains dominion over human life, and we ignore this at our peril.