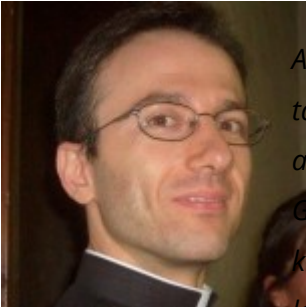


GOSPEL PEARLS

Non-negotiable principles

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Bimbi**

And they sent to him some of the Pharisees and some of the Herodians, to trap him in his talk. And they came and said to him, "Teacher, we know that you are true and do not care about anyone's opinion. For you are not swayed by appearances, but truly teach the way of God. Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar, or not? Should we pay them, or should we not?" But, knowing their hypocrisy, he said to them, "Why put me to the test? Bring me a denarius and let me look at it." And they brought one. And he said to them, "Whose likeness and inscription is this?" They said to him, "Caesar's." Jesus said to them, "Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and render to God the things that are God's." And they marvelled at him. (Mark 12: 13-17)

The hypocrisy of some Pharisees and Herodians lies in the fact that they are not interested in Jesus' answers, but rather want to make him contradict himself in order to undermine his authority and, thus, alienate him from the people's favour. Even today, after two thousand years, there are those who hypocritically misrepresent Jesus' answer in support of fostering a complete separation between their public life as Christian citizens and their own private faith convictions, as if it were possible to separate faith from concrete action. Jesus' answer shows that men and women have been created in God's image and therefore, even in public life, there are non-negotiable principles (life, natural family, freedom of education) that every good society should guarantee together with respect for the Ten Commandments. Although they are revealed truths, they are already written in the hearts in all of us, even in the hearts of non-believers. Therefore, what is also needed today are men and women who are not afraid to publicly advance human and Christian principles for the common good of society.