

October 18, 2020

Twenty-ninth Sunday  
in Ordinary Time (A)Is 45:1, 4-6 | 1 Thes 1:1-5b  
Mt 22:15-21

## Our Civic Duty

**B**y coincidence, these readings appear during election time. They might not tell us how to vote, but they do throw some light on the notion of civic duty. Cyrus in the first reading was the Persian king whose foreign policy allowed conquered and displaced people to return to their homelands, even though they would still be under Persian control. In the Isaian passage, this foreign king is called the Lord's anointed and is blessed by God despite the fact that he is unaware of it. This suggests that even those who do not know or worship the God of Israel can be competent civic leaders as long as they work for the benefit of their citizenry.

The Gospel story is a bit more complex. Jewish law banned making a graven image of a person, as was found on Roman coins. This means that those trying to trap Jesus exposed their own violation of the law by possessing such a coin. Jesus did not condemn the Romans for casting such coins. Rather, he says that political leaders deserve our civic allegiance. How the Jews were to accomplish this without using forbidden Roman coins isn't explained. But then, how civic-minded people are to uphold complicated political and social values today is hard to explain as well. This is one of the challenges of belonging to a pluralist society. No political ticket perfectly mirrors all of the gospel values. Our civic duty is to decide which values we should advance.

—Sr. Dianne Bergant, CSA

### FOR Reflection

- How seriously do you take your civic duty?
- How informed are you about the values of the candidates you support?



ELEMENTS DIGITAL / PEXELS

# Dear Padre,

**As a recovering heroin addict, do I need to go to reconciliation to confess my addiction? Addiction is a disease, not a sin. Right?**

**R**ight, but addiction and actually using drugs are two different things. As you know, recovering addicts who don't use drugs are still addicts, and that in itself isn't a sin. But it's against the law to use heroin in the United States, so even if you never committed a secondary crime to get it, getting it was a crime.



ONE PHOTO: GREGORY A. SHERMIZ/ LONG ISLAND CATHOLIC

More important, though, the body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, and it's a sin to abuse ourselves in any way. Even if it weren't against the law, your use of heroin is certainly an abuse of your body.

The sacrament of reconciliation is more than just receiving absolution for sins. It also helps us look

more deeply at our lives. Before you go, examine your conscience: Ask yourself how your addiction has affected your body, your life, your relationship with God, and the welfare of others.

If you bring honest answers to those questions as well as an open heart and an open mind, your conversation with your priest at reconciliation will help you heal your relationship with God and others. You will also receive the grace to improve your life and do things like overcome addiction so you can be a better person.

—Fr. Patrick Keyes, CSsR  
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## A WORD FROM *Pope Francis*

*Every drug addict has a unique personal story and must be listened to, understood, loved, and, insofar as possible, healed and purified. We cannot stoop to the injustice of categorizing drug addicts as if they were mere objects or broken machines; each person must be valued and appreciated in his or her dignity.*

—ADDRESS TO PONTIFICAL ACADEMY OF SCIENCES,  
 NOVEMBER 24, 2016

## Calendar

### Monday

OCTOBER 19  
 Sts. John de Brébeuf and Isaac Jogues, Priests, and Companions, Martyrs

Eph 2:1-10  
 Lk 12:13-21

### Tuesday

OCTOBER 20  
 Weekday  
 Eph 2:12-22  
 Lk 12:35-38

### Wednesday

OCTOBER 21  
 Weekday  
 Eph 3:2-12  
 Lk 12:39-48

### Thursday

OCTOBER 22  
 Weekday  
 Eph 3:14-21  
 Lk 12:49-53

### Friday

OCTOBER 23  
 Weekday  
 Eph 4:1-6  
 Lk 12:54-59

### Saturday

OCTOBER 24  
 Weekday  
 Eph 4:7-16  
 Lk 13:1-9

### Sunday

OCTOBER 25  
 Thirtieth Sunday in Ordinary Time  
 Ex 22:20-26  
 1 Thes 1:5c-10  
 Mt 22:34-40

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