

# Sunday 29th (A) in Ordinary Time

**Gospel text (Mt 22,15-21): The Pharisees took counsel on how they could trap Jesus with his own words (...). But Jesus understood their evil intent, and said to them, «Hypocrites! Why are you testing me? Show me the coin with which you pay the taxes». They showed him a denarius, and Jesus said to them, «Whose head is this, and whose name?». They answered, «Caesar's». Then Jesus replied, «Therefore, return to Caesar what is Caesar's, and to God what is God's».**

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## *The political State: legitimacy and limits*

EDITORIAL TEAM evangeli.net (based on texts by Benedict XVI)

*(Città del Vaticano, Vatican)*

Today, Jesus responds to the Pharisees that, if the roman emperor is guarantor of Law, he may then demand obedience. However, this extent of obedience is, at the same time, reduced: there is what belongs to "Caesar" and there is what belongs to God. When the "Caesar" upsurges as God, he has surpassed his limits, and to obey him would be to deny God.

If we consider these correlations, we discover a very sober conception of the State: to the extent which it guarantees peace and Law, these correlations correspond to a divine provision (a sort of creatural sorting). You have to respect the State precisely in its profane character; this need arises from the essence of the man as "animal sociale et politicum". At the same time there is a delimitation of the State: it has its own scope, which it may not exceed; because it must comply with the highest "Right of God".

—"You shall worship the Lord, your God, only". The refusal to worship the Emperor and, in general, the refusal to worship the State, is nothing else but the refusal to totalitarian States.