

Advent Devotional December 2, 2020

Scripture

Luke 20:19-26

19 When the scribes and chief priests realized that he had told this parable against them, they wanted to lay hands on him at that very hour, but they feared the people. 20 So they watched him and sent spies who pretended to be honest, in order to trap him by what he said, so as to hand him over to the jurisdiction and authority of the governor. 21 So they asked him, "Teacher, we know that you are right in what you say and teach, and you show deference to no one, but teach the way of God in accordance with truth. 22 Is it lawful for us to pay taxes to the emperor, or not?" 23 But he perceived their craftiness and said to them, 24 "Show me a denarius. Whose head and whose title does it bear?" They said, "The emperor's." 25 He said to them, "Then give to the emperor the things that are the emperor's, and to God the things that are God's." 26 And they were not able in the presence of the people to trap him by what he said; and being amazed by his answer, they became silent.

Devotional

The Rev. Carol Divens Roth '85

No matter what he looked like in real life, Tiberius Caesar was probably depicted as a handsome fellow on the denarius, which bore his image. If you were the metalsmith in charge, would you risk insulting the emperor? The people who trade in the coin of the realm bear the imprint of Rome. The government—its laws, its culture, its morality—is in charge, as represented on the money they use.

Jesus knows that fact and offers a different currency—a currency that bears the image of the one true God. This currency comprises the people stamped by the Creator on the sixth day to live in true shalom—to love God and neighbor, to be stewards of the earth, to do justice, and to show lovingkindness.

We are God's spending money, meant to be used to show what is of real value in the commonwealth of heaven on earth. What's in *your* wallet?

Prayer

Arriving God, in a season when we focus on giving and receiving, spend us. Let our love and service reflect your beauty to each and all in the world you have made, and let us see you in them too. Amen.