Ss Mary & Joseph & St Mark

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29th Sunday in Ordinary Time | 18 October 2026
World Mission Sunday



SUNDAY GOSPEL: Matthew 22:15-21

"Therefore, render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's."

...Jesus's answer has reverberated across the centuries. For we are the coins that bear His image and likeness. **All that we are, all that we have, is first and truly God's. We belong to Him and not to Caesar.** What is it, though, to belong to God? To be God's possessions? Where Caesar's lordship diminishes His subjects' freedom, may lead to enslavement and death, God's reclaiming of us makes for our freedom from sin and death, leads us from slavery into adoption as sons and daughters of God in Christ. As such, by the gift of the Holy Spirit, we share His love for what is good and true.

That must condition all that any Caesar may ask of us. Certainly, no ruler, no state, can simply identify their policies with God's will; they cannot claim God's authority for whatever the state may purpose. Our faith thus necessarily makes us opponents of totalitarian rulers and their wars of aggression. Nor can we accept attempts to make the Church subservient to the State, as happened in the Henrician reformation. Perhaps that's obvious, but it is easy to forget that secular democracies may be equally over-bearing, bring in laws that cut across our prior obedience to God and His righteousness. More insidious still, societies may collude in defining the 'rational' options, the ground of intelligent debate, so as to exclude as irrational our faith-perspective. Caesar doesn't just strike the coins, print and perhaps guarantee the currency used in the markets; a state and its culture may lay claim to the currency of ideas. One of the things that Dominicans are meant to do within the Church is to critique this currency of ideas, to clarify and uphold the values and understanding carried by the Church. Our faith should make us sharp, perceptive critics of the culture in which we live, whenever its ideology lays a false claim to our respect, would command our thoughts, our assent to its half-truths and euphemisms through its pervasive presence in the media.

On the other hand, what Jesus says here is no charter for disengagement, for ghetto-Catholicism. To be human is to be sociable and within a society that must subordinate personal freedom to the common good. Furthermore, to be human in a fallen world is necessarily to belong to a society in which unjust individuals and factions must be constrained through force, and force which is exercised by those who are themselves imperfect instruments of justice. We have to work out what we owe such regimes, and also what opportunities they offer us. Fr Richard Finn OP. Full text

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René Girard, the great Franco-American philosopher and social commentator, is best known for his speculations on what he called the scapegoating mechanism. Sadly, Girard maintained, most human communities are predicated upon this dysfunctional and deeply destructive instinct. Roughly speaking, it unfolds as follows. When tensions arise in a group, people commence to cast about for a scapegoat, for someone or some group to blame. Deeply attractive, even addictive, the scapegoating move rapidly attracts a crowd, which in short order becomes a mob.

In their common hatred of the victim, the blamers feel an ersatz sense of togetherness. Filled with the excitement born of self-righteousness, the mob then endeavours to isolate and finally eliminate the scapegoat, convinced that this will restore order to their roiled society. The Gospels appreciated the Girardian dynamic long before Girard.

Bishop Robert Barron

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Parish Address: The Presbytery, 186 St John's Road, Hemel Hempstead, Herts. HP1 1NR

Sunday Cycle: Year A
Week Day Readings Year: 2
Divine Office: Week 1

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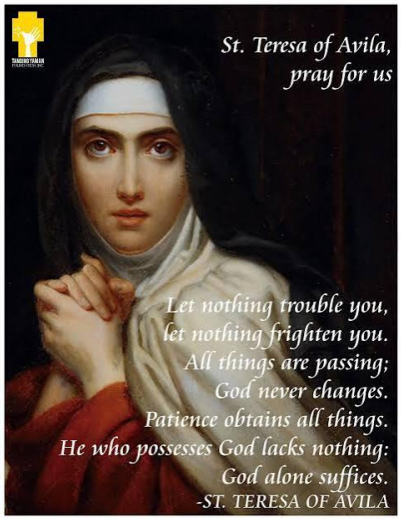

SMSJ: *Ss Mary & Joseph Church, St John's Road, Boxmoor, HP1 1NR*
SM: *St Mark's Church, John F Kennedy School, Hollybush Lane, HP12PH*

Date	Holy Mass Intentions
Sat 17 Oct	*St Ignatius of Antioch, B & M*
(SMSJ) 8am	Adoration & Confessions
(SMSJ) 9am	Mass Judite Canha (RIP)
(SMSJ) 4-4.45pm	Confessions
(SMSJ) 5pm	Vigil Mass Johannah Roach (INT)
Sun 18 Oct	**29th Sunday in Ordinary Time**
	World Mission Sunday Collection
(SMSJ) 7.30am	Holy Hour of Adoration
(SMSJ) 8.30am	Mass People of the Parish
(SMSJ) 10am	Mass Vera Henry (RIP ANNIV)
(SM) 11.30am	Mass
2pm	***Caritas Tea at Our Lady's***
Mon 19 Oct	*Feria*
(SMS) 10am	Mass For an End to Abortion
Tues 20 Oct	*Feria*
(SMSJ) 10am	Mass
(SMSJ) 6pm	Mass
7pm	***Adult Formation (RCIA) in St Joseph's Hall***
Wed 21 Oct	*Feria*
(SMSJ) 7.30am	Mass
(SMSJ) 9am	Holy Hour of Adoration
(SMSJ) 10am	Mass Dominador Bautista (RIP)
5pm	***Confirmation Group A in St Joseph's Hall***
Thurs 22 Oct	*Feria*
(SM) 8.15am	Mass for JFK
(SMSJ) 10am	Mass
10.45am	*St Rose's Reception Class visiting SMSJ*
Fri 23 Oct	*Feria*
(SMSJ) 9am	Holy Hour of Adoration
(SMSJ) 10am	Mass
Sat 24 Oct	*The Blessed Virgin Mary*
(SMSJ) 8am	Adoration & Confessions
(SMSJ) 9am	Mass
(SMSJ) 4-4.45pm	Confessions
(SMSJ) 5pm	Vigil Mass Patrick Roach (RIP)
Sun 25 Oct	**30th Sunday in Ordinary Time**
(SMSJ) 7.30am	Holy Hour of Adoration
(SMSJ) 8.30am	Mass
(SMSJ) 10am	Mass People of the Parish
(SM) 11.30am	Mass

PLEASE NOTE!
There will be no 11.30am Mass at St Mark on Sunday 1 November.
There will be a 12noon Mass at Ss Mary & Joseph.

SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION (CONFESSION)
Saturday 8am-8.45am & 4pm-4.45pm at SS Mary & Joseph Church

THE POPE'S MONTHLY INTENTION FOR OCTOBER: For mental health ministry. Let us pray that the mental health ministry be established throughout the Church, helping to overcome the stigma and discrimination of persons with mental illnesses.

THE SICK: Paula Moore, John Ranch, Margaret Marchant, Tommy McLoughlin, Chrissie Ward, Juliet Edgar, Peter & Rose Gray, Andrew Cooper, David Turner, Andy Swift, David O'Mahoney, Rosie Fletcher, Lucy Chapman, Ellen Brett, Susana, Fr Dennis Opoku, Sabina Xavier, Jacqueline Austin, Merril Delaney, Marie Anthony, Terry Pearson, Mary Alcock, Louie Reidy
THE DEPARTED: Doreen Cash, Anna Carmichael, Verne Pitt

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COLLECTIONS FOR CHARITIES: THANK YOU for your offerings, totalling £629, for CAFOD Fast Day and from donations at Tea at St Mark's. A total of £436.988 was also raised for MacMillan Cancer Support from the Table top sale and Tea at St Mark.

St Joseph's Men meet Friday 27 November 7pm & walk to supper at the Paper Mill. All men are welcome.

WESTMINSTER YOUTH MINISTRY: Please click **here** for forthcoming events.

LITTLE CHURCH for 5-7-year olds**,** during 10am Mass. Courtney Kinsell has offered to co-ordinate Little Church, starting as soon as we can in October. Parents will also be needed to help and will need a DBS.

WORLD MISSION SUNDAY 18 OCTOBER: The Holy Father invites all Catholics to support his charity for World Mission through a second collection. Envelopes are available at the back of church. More details **here**

RCIA (Adult Formation in the Catholic Faith) Tuesday 20 October, 7-8.30pm. *See the website for all of the dates.*

MARY'S MEALS is hosting a free screening of its powerful new feature film, Lettie; a woman's survival against all odds, on 22 October. To book for free, click **here**

PARISH OFFICE: The office be closed on 23 & 26 October.

WESTMINSTER YEAR BOOK: If you would like to purchase a Year Book for 2027, please let Shirley know by email by Friday 30 October 2026.

Throughout NOVEMBER Masses will be offered for the Holy Souls. Please fill in the purple sheet with the names of your beloved departed, place it in the envelope with your offering and place the envelope in the boxes in front of the Altar.

ST ROSE'S SCHOOL: To book onto the Pre School, Nursery and Reception 2027 tours please click **here** ***A Certificate of Catholic Practice is not required for St Rose's and St Cuthbert Mayne Schools***. If you require a CCP for St Albert the Great School, please make an appointment by email with Fr David to obtain one. Download the 2 forms **here**

ABORTION IS NOT A HUMAN RIGHT: It is appalling that the abortion lobby wants to proclaim abortion as a human right. This is the opposite of the truth. For more details click **here**.

ALTAR SERVERS: As of 1 September, the rules changed. Only DBS certified people may be in the Sacristy before Mass. Soon there will be consent forms, serving practices and a monthly rota.

PILGRIMAGE TO MEDJUGORJE in either the first or second week in October 2027. If you are interested in going, please contact Pat Henry

HEMEL YOUNG ADULTS 18-25: Friday 6 November & 4 December, 7.30-9.30pm, Adoration and Social at Our Lady Queen of All Creation. See flyer for details. (Mass is at 7pm

A Day with Mary: Saturday 7 November, 9.45am until 5pm. Details **here.**

NEW LIFE RETREAT: Saturday 14 November, 10am-5pm at Our Lady and St Vincent Parish, Potters Bar. Details **here**.

Retreat Day RECEIVE & RESPOND at Christ the King, Potters Bar, N14 4HE on Sat 28 Nov, 10.30am-5.30pm. See flyer & register here

PRAYING WITH THE SCRIPTURES: Saturday 24 October, 2pm at Westminster Cathedral Hall. Details **here**.

DAILY PRAYER @ Sacredspace.com

DAILY READINGS & REFLECTIONS : My Catholic Life, Word on Fire, Christian Art
WESTMINSTER DIOCESE NEWS
CATHOLIC NEWS IN ENGLAND AND WALES