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Give to God the things that are God's

BY THE RT. REV. DIANE M. JARDINE BRUCE

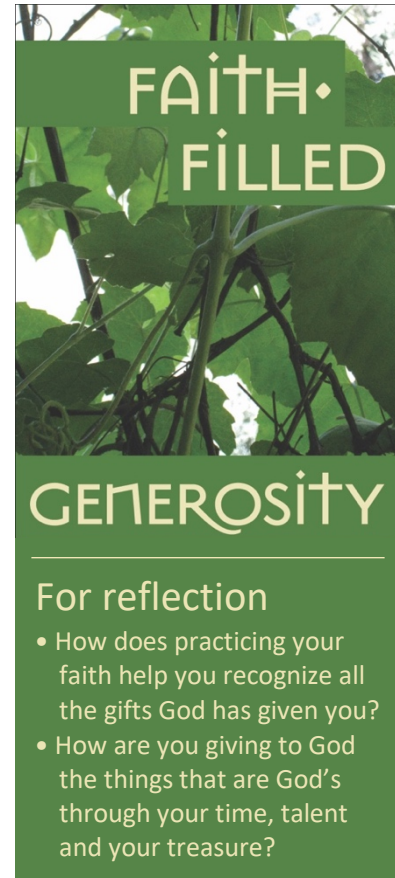


Once again in today's gospel the Pharisees are trying to trip up Jesus. If Jesus supports the paying of the tax, his Jewish siblings who are rebelling against the Roman occupation will shun him. If Jesus says it's unlawful to pay the tax, he'll be in trouble with the Roman authorities. What does Jesus do? He asks them to look at the coin. It is a Roman coin. Pay the tax – meaning give the Emperor back his own coin! Then Jesus adds that wonderful line — *give to God the things that are God's*.

What exactly IS God's? Well, we are! Our Christian faith in God points us always to live a life of gratitude and generosity. God showed us how we are to live and how to *give to God the things that are God's*: God gave us God's son, God's first fruit, and we are asked to do the same, remembering that everything we have, everything we do, everything we are is a gift from God — and it is a gift that is meant to be shared. When we share from our first fruits, as God shared God's first fruit with us, we are modeling the same generosity God has shown us.

Remember, we have two sets of three legged-stools in our Episcopal Branch of the Jesus Movement: scripture, reason and tradition, and time, talent and treasure. The first shapes our faith; the second is how we use the gifts we have been given to live out our faith.

The Rt. Rev. Diane M. Jardine Bruce is the Bishop Suffragan in the Diocese of Los Angeles. Her ministry focuses heavily on stewardship, financial sustainability and New Community development.



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