

# State and Church, a complicated marriage



## PRAY

Lord, you once said: "Render unto Caesar that which is Caesar's, and unto God that which is God's" (Mt 22:21). Thus you taught us the subtle distinction that we should be entirely citizens of this world but that finally we still have another Lord besides the lords of the world. Teach us how to be good citizens the state can count on in hard times, too. But teach us also where we must interfere and be the „salt of earth“ in social debates. Give us, if necessary, the strength for deeds of resistance, too. Amen.



## CONTEMPLATE

One person reads the Bible passage aloud.  
Short silence.

**Exchange:** *What particularly appealed to you?*



## STUDY

1. Read DOCAT text sentence-for-sentence. Then one person reads the text aloud in full.
2. Three minutes of silence.
3. Each person reads a word or phrase aloud (without comment) that he or she has noticed.
4. Explain briefly in the next round why you have chosen the sentence (e.g. memories, questions, etc.).



## DISCUSS

**Also discuss your own questions on this topic!**

**Treasure Book:** *Take five minutes to write down what you don't want to forget.*



## CHALLENGE

Our **CHALLENGES** are just suggestions you can make in addition to your study guide meetings. You can also replace them with stronger, more fitting, more original or better ones. Just let us know at [feedback@youcat.org](mailto:feedback@youcat.org).

**#DOCATChallenge:** *Share your experience on Facebook or Instagram.*



## Mt 22:19-21

"Show me the coin that pays the census tax." Then they handed him the Roman coin. He said to them, "Whose image is this and whose inscription?" They replied, "Caesar's." At that he said to them, "Then repay to Caesar what belongs to Caesar and to God what belongs to God."

224

## What connects and what separates Church and State?

Like the State, the Church on earth is a community with a visible organizational structure, yet they are mutually independent and self-governing. The Church is no longer politically bound up with the State, as was the case in the centuries of the "alliance of throne and altar". In this sense, the autonomy and independence of Church and State are especially emphasized. The political and the spiritual common good can be separated to a great extent, even though there will always be points of mutual contact. For this reason, Church and State must work together well. Despite the obligation to obey laws, the Church reserves the right to act as a moral corrective and to criticize the State when she sees ethical principles being violated.

1. A constitutional state is a state in which there are just laws (based on human rights) and division of power. Why can a good relationship between the state and the church exist only when the state is a constitutional state?
2. Can the Church have the absolute consistency between State and Church as a goal? If so — then why? If not — then why not?
3. Can Christians withdraw from the State and build up a special purpose association if the State is not serving their interests any longer?
4. What are the demands we can legitimately make to the State on behalf of the Church? (Read also Docat question 225)

All over the world, demonstrations for life, for human rights or against radical parties are taking place. Check where this happens — and if you could participate with your group.

Do you take on this challenge?

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