

The Living Word

Twenty-third Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year A

6 September 2020

First Reading Ez 33:7-9

If you have not warned the wicked man, then I will hold you responsible for his death.

The word of the Lord was addressed to me as follows, 'Son of man, I have appointed you as sentry to the House of Israel. When you hear a word from my mouth, warn them in my name. If I say to a wicked man: Wicked wretch, you are to die, and you do not speak to warn the wicked man to renounce his ways, then he shall die for his sin, but I will hold you responsible for his death. If, however, you do warn a wicked man to renounce his ways and repent, and he does not repent, then he shall die for his sin, but you yourself will have saved your life.'

Responsorial Psalm

Ps 94:1-2.6-9. R. v.8

**(R.) O that today you would listen to his voice!
Harden not your hearts.**

1. Come, ring out our joy to the Lord;
hail the rock who saves us.
Let us come before him, giving thanks,
with songs let us hail the Lord. (R.)
2. Come in; let us bow and bend low;
let us kneel before the God who made us
for he is our God and we
the people who belong to his pasture,
the flock that is led by his hand. (R.)
3. O that today you would listen to his
voice!
'Harden not your hearts as at Meribah,
as on that day at Massah in the desert
when your fathers put me to the test;
when they tried me, though they saw
my work.' (R.)

Second Reading Rom 13:8-10

Love is the fulfilment of the Law.

Avoid getting into debt, except the debt of mutual love. If you love your fellow men you have carried out your obligations. All the commandments: You shall not commit adultery, you shall not kill, you shall not steal, you shall not covet, and so on, are summed up in this single command: You must love your neighbour as yourself. Love is the one thing that cannot hurt your neighbour; that is why it is the answer to every one of the commandments.

Gospel Acclamation 2 Cor 5:19

Alleluia, alleluia!

**God was in Christ, to reconcile the
world to himself;**

**and the Good News of reconciliation
he has entrusted to us.**

Alleluia!

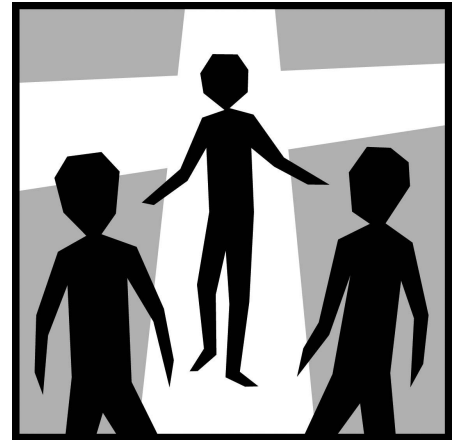
Gospel Mt 18:15-20

If your brother or sister listens to you, you will have won that person back.

Jesus said to his disciples: 'If your brother does something wrong, go and have it out with him alone, between your two selves. If he listens to you, you have won back your brother. If he does not listen, take one or two others with you: the evidence of two or three witnesses is required to sustain any charge. But if he refuses to listen to these, report it to the community; and if he refuses to listen to the community, treat him like a pagan or a tax collector.

'I tell you solemnly, whatever you bind on earth shall be considered bound in heaven; whatever you loose on earth shall be considered loosed in heaven.

'I tell you solemnly once again, if two of you on earth agree to ask anything at all, it will be granted to you by my Father in heaven. For where two or three meet in my name, I shall be there with them.'



Reflection by Fr Michael Tate

Our Lord acknowledged that the community he was establishing had to set boundaries. Who is to decide who is within or outside those boundaries?

In today's Gospel, Our Lord teaches that a nuanced step by step process should be invoked. First, there is private conversation, then slightly extended to bring in two or three others, then a sort of church community jury before a person is put beyond the pale. Our Lord promises to be with them to help guide their decision.

We all know of marriages which are fractured and where one partner has found intimacy and security in a second (civil) marriage.

Pope Francis has not suggested that the second marriage be regarded as valid. But he has suggested a process of discernment to allow a divorced person to receive 'the Eucharist . . . a powerful medicine and nourishment for the weak.'

Could a jury of ordinary Catholic lay people help make that discerning judgement, and then advise the Bishop as to the next step?

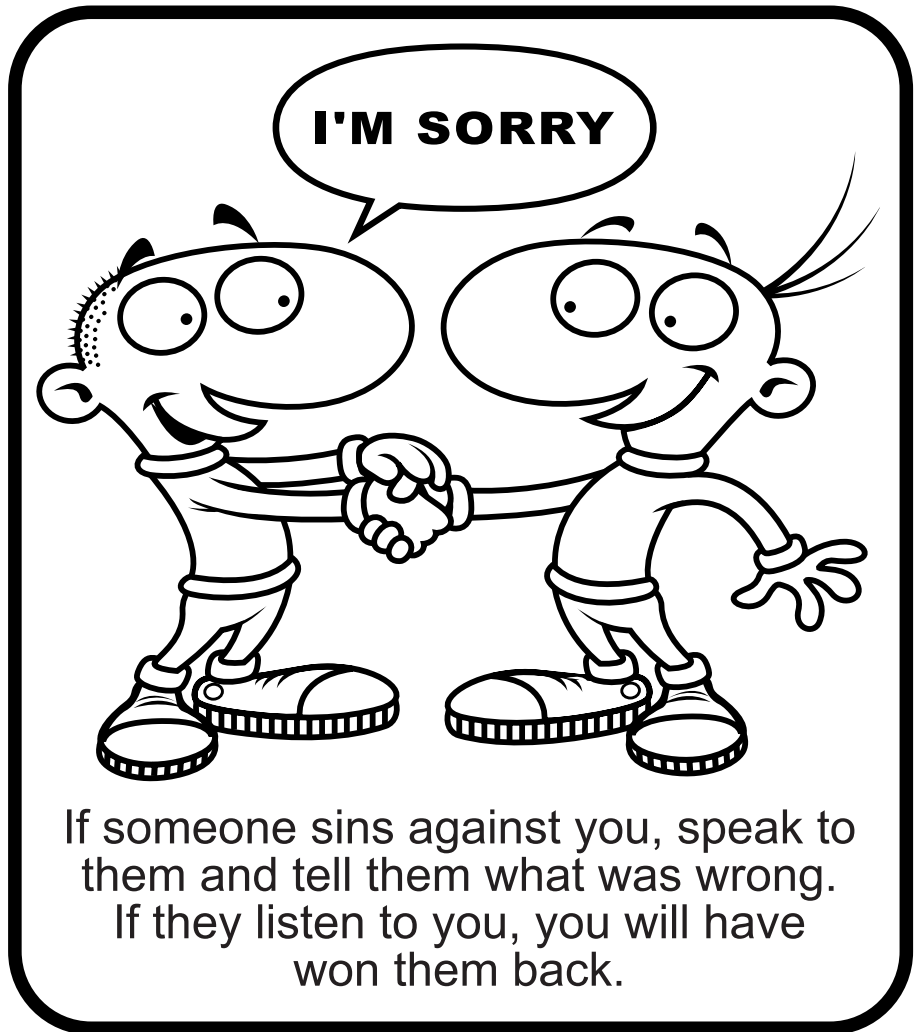
We could pause for a moment to ponder the promise: 'Where two or three are gathered into my name, I am there with them.'

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The Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary is a feast that commemorates the birthday of Jesus' mother. Even though Mary's birth is not recorded in the scriptures, it is mentioned in the Apocryphal writings from the second century, the Protoevangelium of James and is even mentioned in Islamic scripture. Her parents are named as Saint Anne and Saint Joachim and tradition places Mary's birthplace in Jerusalem. The feast has been celebrated since the fifth century – on September 8 in the Roman Calendar.



Wordsearch

Try to find these words:



- church
- go
- listen
- private
- refuse
- Scriptures
- sin
- true
- two
- unbeliever
- witnesses
- wrong

W	I	T	N	E	S	S	E	S	I	Z	G	M	C	F	D
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