

September 10th 2023 23rd Sunday of Ordinary Time – Year A – Matthew 18:15-20

¹⁵ 'If another member of the church * sins against you, * go and point out the fault when the two of you are alone. If the member listens to you, you have regained that one. * ¹⁶But if you are not listened to, take one or two others along with you, so that every word may be confirmed by the evidence of two or three witnesses. ¹⁷If the member refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if the offender refuses to listen even to the church, let such a one be to you as a Gentile and a tax-collector. ¹⁸Truly I tell you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven. ¹⁹Again, truly I tell you, if two of you agree on earth about anything you ask, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven. ²⁰For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them.'

<p>➤ Read and re-read – out loud and slowly the Gospel.</p> <p>➤ Meditate - on reading as being spoken to you, an experience in your life</p>	<p>➤ Pray - Thanksgiving – Repentance – Petition</p> <p>➤ Action – Attitude (Call to change / to act /to do</p>
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In this week's gospel we see the way Jesus deals with conflict. He goes through a series of procedures starting with those which will cause the least hurt. He then gradually moves to more severe ones always making sure that the others have been tried and failed. The setting of this teaching is not in a court of law but a human community. Jesus always preached love rather than tolerance and he has promised us he will be there in the midst of all those who call on him for assistance. How have you experienced the presence of Jesus in his followers gathered together in community?

Prayer:

Thank you Lord for sending us people who show us how to handle quarrels. Like Jesus they do not lash us in an abstract way but walk with us when we have to deal with a problem.

Forgive us Lord when conflicts arise, we make them public too quickly instead of taking time to sort them out privately first.

Help us Lord to remember that love will always respect human freedom including peoples right to say no, even to God's love. Today's second reading tells us 'love is the one thing that cannot hurt your neighbour.'

