

The Living Word

Twenty-third Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year A

6 September 2026

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!

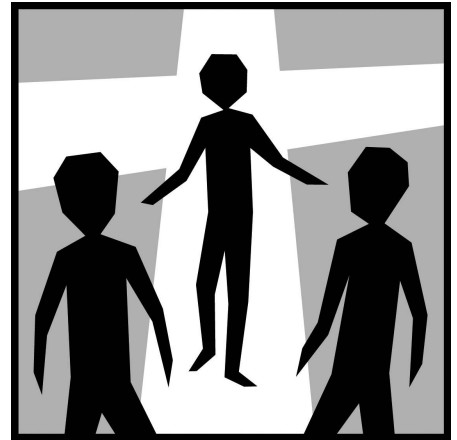
Gospel Mt 18:15-20

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 Nick Brodie

This Gospel is clearly about becoming part of team Jesus. There's the bit about gathering in twos and threes to find agreement about what we – including Jesus – want or need. Then we (the Greek 'you' is plural) are told we can jointly bind and loose, literally from the ground up.

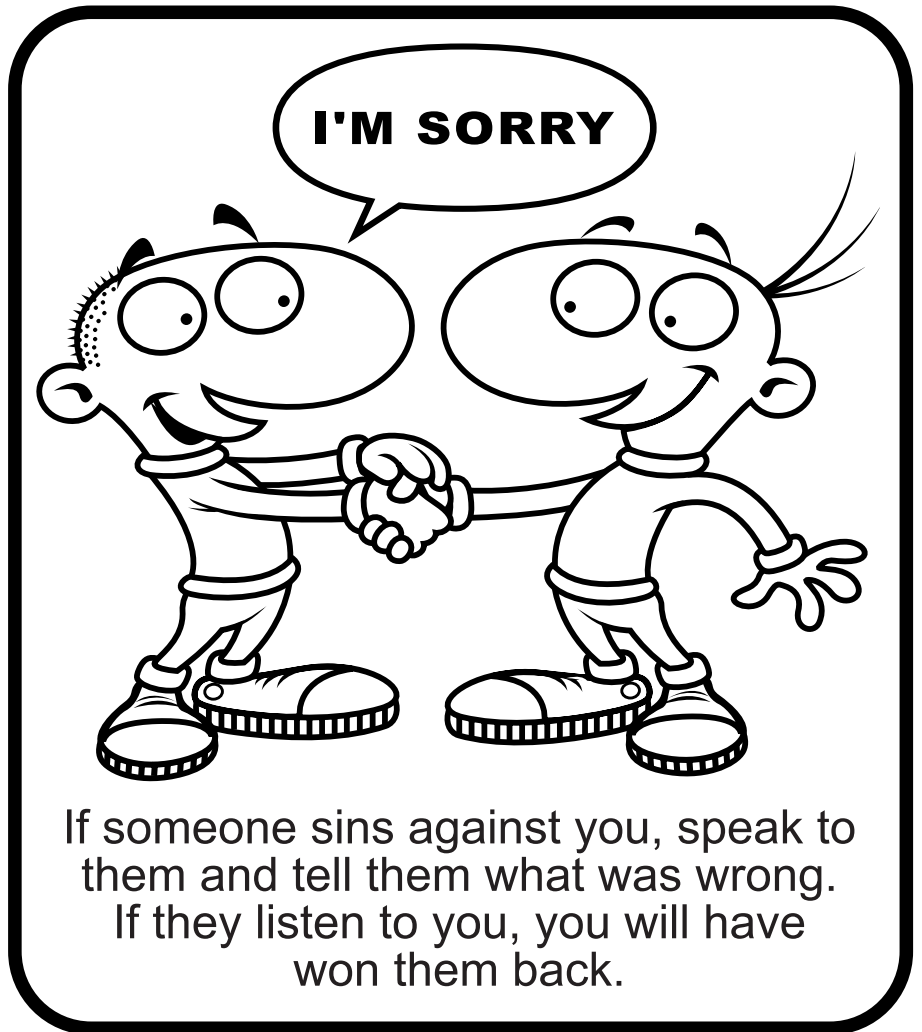
This is, therefore, a profoundly synodal passage. It's an instruction manual for dealing with the messy realities in which the Church sometimes finds itself, and a reminder of the importance of community. There is even a plan for dealing with the odd recalcitrant brother who just won't listen! Jesus' key takeaway is about persistence and working together.

In our own times, where there is lots of scope for collective action on important issues, Jesus' frequent mention of 'earth' resonates. We are called to be the salt of the earth, a grounded people whose decisions can have heavenly effects.

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St Peter Claver was born in Spain in 1581 AD. After studying at the University of Barcelona, he became a Jesuit at the age of 20. St Peter was influenced by St Alphonsus Rodriguez to become a missionary in the Americas, where he ministered both physically and spiritually to the African slaves. He spent the next 40 years working for the humane treatment of slaves on plantations, and he reportedly converted some 300,000 African slaves to Christianity. Within the Spanish community living in America, St Peter organised charitable societies, similar to those organised by St Vincent de Paul across Europe. He said of the slaves, "We must speak to them with our hands by giving, before we try to speak to them with our lips."



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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