

he listens to you, you have won back your brother. If he does not listen, take one or two others along 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.'

The Gospel of the Lord.

R. Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

HOMILY

PROFESSION OF FAITH APOSTLES' CREED
Or the Nicene Creed may be said.

I believe in God, / the Father almighty, / Creator of heaven and earth, / and in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, / who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, / born of the Virgin Mary, / suffered under Pontius Pilate, / was crucified, died and was buried; / he descended into hell; / on the third day he rose again from the dead; / he ascended into heaven, / and is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty; / from there he will come to judge the living and the dead. / I believe in the Holy Spirit, / the holy catholic Church, / the communion of saints, / the forgiveness of sins, / the resurrection of the body, / and life everlasting. Amen.

PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL

LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST

After the priest raises the paten with the bread and prays, and then the chalice, we respond to each prayer:

R. Blessed be God for ever.

P. Pray, brethren (brothers and sisters), that my sacrifice and yours may be acceptable to God, the almighty Father.

R. May the Lord accept the sacrifice at your hands for the praise and glory of his name, for our good and the good of all his holy Church.

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

P. O God, who give us the gift of true prayer and of peace, graciously grant that, through this offering, we may do fitting homage to your divine majesty and, by partaking of the sacred mystery, we may be faithfully united in mind and heart. Through Christ our Lord.
R. Amen.

THE EUCHARISTIC PRAYER

P. The Lord be with you.

R. And with your spirit.

P. Lift up your hearts.

R. We lift them up to the Lord.

P. Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

R. It is right and just.

PREFACE I-VIII OF THE SUNDAYS IN ORDINARY TIME

After the Preface, we sing or say:

All: Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God of hosts. Heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.

THE MEMORIAL ACCLAMATION

P. The mystery of faith.

All: Save us, Saviour of the world, for by your Cross and Resurrection you have set us free.

COMMUNION RITE

P. At the Saviour's command and formed by divine teaching, we dare to say:

All: Our Father, who art in heaven ...

P. Deliver us, Lord, we pray...

All: For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours now and for ever.

P. Lord Jesus Christ, who said...

R. Amen.

P. The peace of the Lord be with you always.

R. And with your spirit.

P. Let us offer each other the sign of peace.

All exchange a sign of peace

LAMB OF GOD

All: Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world, have mercy on us.

Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world, have mercy on us.

Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world, grant us peace.

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

R. Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof, but only say the word and my soul shall be healed.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON cf. Ps 41:2-3

Like the deer that yearns for running streams, so my soul is yearning for you, my God; my soul is thirsting for God, the living God.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

P. Grant that your faithful, O Lord, whom you nourish and endow with life through the food of your Word and heavenly Sacrament, may so benefit from your beloved Son's great gifts that we may merit an eternal share in his life. Who lives and reigns for ever and ever.
R. Amen.

THE CONCLUDING RITES

P. The Lord be with you.

R. And with your spirit.

P. May almighty God bless you, the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

R. Amen.

P. Go in peace.

R. Thanks be to God.

REFLECTIONS ON THE GOSPEL

WINNING PEOPLE BACK

The Church is not a community of the perfect. Allowance has to be made for dealing with moral lapses and dissensions that inevitably occur in a community still on the way to the Kingdom.

In today's Gospel the procedure Jesus lays down for dealing with conflict reveals his sense of the Church as the *family* of God. Correction should as far as possible be carried out in private. Only if that proves unsuccessful should a carefully staged progression of increasingly public procedures be set in place. The goal is not simply to win, but rather to 'win back' the 'brother or sister', to preserve as far as possible the dignity of the errant person, and to enhance everyone's sense of being a valued member of the 'family'.

If, despite all, the process fails, there is nothing to be done but to treat the person as an outsider. There comes a point beyond which a community can no longer tolerate members who consistently defy its core values.

To set someone outside the community is no light matter. The Church needs to know that its decisions in this regard enjoy heavenly sanction. Hence Jesus' assurance that the 'binding and loosing' authority conferred personally upon Peter in regard to interpretations of the law (Matthew 16:19), is also enjoyed by the local community with respect to the exclusion or non-exclusion of errant members. As risen Lord, Jesus remains 'Emmanuel', 'God with us', in community life and deliberation (see Matthew 1:23). The Church's canon law and way of proceeding has developed way beyond this simple instruction. But its fundamental spirit should remain.

BRENDAN BYRNE, SJ

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OUR SUNDAY CELEBRATION

TWENTY-THIRD SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME / A

06 SEPTEMBER 2020

I SHALL BE THERE WITH THEM. Every Christian community experiences difficulties in one form or another. Misunderstandings occur, divisions arise. Today's Gospel reminds us that Christ is present in our communities even when they are broken, when only two or three meet in his name. Healing occurs when we seek to embody in our communities the qualities of Christ, especially forgiveness and mutual love.

INTRODUCTORY RITES

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON Ps 118: 137, 124
You are just, O Lord, and your judgement is right; treat your servant in accord with your merciful love.

GREETING

P. In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

R. Amen.

P. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

R. And with your spirit.

PENITENTIAL ACT

P. Brethren (brothers and sisters), let us acknowledge our sins, and so prepare ourselves to celebrate the sacred mysteries.

P. You were sent to heal the contrite of heart: Lord, have mercy.

R. Lord, have mercy.

P. You came to call sinners: Christ, have mercy.

R. Christ, have mercy.

You are seated at the right hand of the Father to intercede for us: Lord, have mercy.

R. Lord, have mercy.

P. May almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us our sins, and bring us to everlasting life.

R. Amen.

GLORIA

Glory to God in the highest, / and on earth peace to people of good will. / We praise you, / we bless you, / we adore you, / we glorify you, / we give you thanks for your great glory, / Lord God, heavenly King, / O God, almighty Father. / Lord Jesus Christ, Only Begotten Son, / Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father, / you take away the sins of the world, / have mercy on us; / you take away the sins of the world, / receive our prayer; / you are seated at the right hand of the Father, / have mercy on us. / For you alone are the Holy One, / you alone are the Lord, / you alone are the Most High, / Jesus Christ, / with the Holy Spirit, / in the glory of God the Father. / Amen.

COLLECT

P. O God, by whom we are redeemed and receive adoption, look graciously upon your beloved sons and daughters, that those who believe in Christ may receive true freedom and an everlasting inheritance. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

R. Amen.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

FIRST READING

Ezek 33:7-9

*A reading from the prophet Ezekiel
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.'

The word of the Lord.

R. Thanks be to God.

RESP 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

*A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Romans
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.

The word of the Lord.

R. Thanks be to God

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

P. The Lord be with you.

R. And with your spirit.

P. A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew.

R. Glory to you, O Lord.

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