

Fr. Martin's Reflection – September 10, 2023

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Our gospel reading, Matthew 18:15-20, is a significant passage in the New Testament that offers guidance on conflict resolution and the power of communal prayer within the Christian faith. This passage is both practical and spiritual, providing valuable insights into how we should navigate disagreements and maintain unity within our home, workplace, school, and parish.

At its core, Matthew emphasizes the importance of addressing conflicts directly and privately. It begins with the instruction to approach someone who has sinned against you in private, highlighting the value of personal communication and reconciliation. This approach prioritizes humility and forgiveness, reflecting the teachings of Jesus throughout the Gospels.

The passage further emphasizes the communal aspect of the Christian faith. When two or more gather in Christ's name, He is present among them. This highlights the significance of Christian community and the collective power of prayer. The act of bringing a matter before the congregation signifies the gravity of the issue and the need for the support and guidance of our brothers and sisters.

In practical terms, Jesus encourages us to be a transparent and accountable Church family. It promotes a process of reconciliation that begins with individuals but can involve the broader community when necessary. This approach fosters a culture of forgiveness and restoration, crucial for maintaining the spiritual health of the Church.

Additionally, Matthew 18:15-20 highlights the authority granted to the Church in matters of discipline and binding and loosing. This highlights the responsibility of the Church to uphold the teachings and principles of Christ, ensuring the spiritual well-being of its members.

Matthew 18:15-20 serves as a profound guide for Christians in handling conflicts, promoting unity, and harnessing the collective power of prayer. It emphasizes the values of reconciliation, humility, and community, offering a blueprint for how believers can navigate disputes while upholding the teachings of Jesus and maintaining the strength of the Church.

St. Paul tells us in today's second reading: "Love is the one thing that cannot hurt your neighbor." If we have been hurt, let us approach those who have hurt us with the heart of Christian love, in so doing they may recognize the hurt they have caused and be reconciled. If we approach with a heart filled with a desire for revenge, then we can expect a long-contracted quarrel/fight that will cause long term damage to all around us.

Let us pray for each other that we will be able to live in harmony with each other, at home, school, work, and with our parish family.

Have a blessed week.

Fr. Martin