

Holy Spirit Catholic Church
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September 10, 2020

Dear Parishioners,

I invite you to open your bible and read over last Sunday's readings and Gospel. Let us pray for our world, firefighters, our environment, and let us love our neighbors as ourselves.

Fr. Pat

23rd Sunday in Ordinary Time

First Reading: Ezekiel 33:7-9

Second Reading: Romans 13:8-10

Gospel: Matthew 18:15-20

Msgr. McCormick's Homily

One of the most difficult things in life is correcting another person. Yes, there are people who seem always to be correcting others --- but that type of person rarely has any lasting success. What the Lord God wants from us is to find ways to draw others to HIM, the Lord God, by the way of correction. That is a divine task.

We have developed, a "live and let live" morality by which we can avoid any conflicts but also avoid talking about what is right and what is wrong.

The Gospel passage we have today is all about how to deal with a neighbor who has wronged us. But we can also look at this from the other side where we are the one wronging someone else. It works both ways.

Scripture tells us to avoid the practice of gossiping and complaining to others about a grievance; rather, we should confront the person who has offended us directly and courageously. That way the difficulty is addressed, the loving concern of the complainant is evident, and the process of rumor, attack, counter-attack, innuendo, and scapegoating is arrested.

The challenge is: how to bring about reconciliation with a deep awareness of the truth of the situation. All of us must learn that we offend others at times, that we misjudge others at times, that we take advantage of others at times. If we can come to recognize our own brokenness and lack of love towards others, then we will find it much easier to deal with the brokenness and lack of love in others.

So our first challenge today is to accept that we are broken and need correction. Only within that context can we see God's love. Then in God's love we might be able to speak the truth to others in our lives.

St Augustine, who was never afraid to speak the hard truth when necessary, followed the recommendations of Matthew 18 very concretely. Over the table in his episcopal residence where he dined with the priests of his diocese hung a sign that read: "If you speak ill of your brother here, you are not welcome at this table." And it is said that the Bishop of Hippo, St. Augustine, would enforce the rule, pointing to the sign when one of his charges began complaining or gossiping.