

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

You are just, O Lord, and your judgement is right;  
treat your servant in accord with your merciful love.

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

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,  
God, for ever and ever.  
Amen.

FIRST READING

Ez 33:7-9

A reading from the prophet Ezekiel

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.  
Thanks be to God.

PSALM

Ps 94:1-2,6-9

Response:

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

Rm 13:8-10

A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Romans

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.  
Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia, alleluia!  
Your word is truth, O Lord,  
consecrate us in the truth.  
Alleluia!

GOSPEL

Mt 18:15-20

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew

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 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.  
Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

PROFESSION OF FAITH

I believe in one God,  
the Father almighty,  
maker of heaven and earth,  
of all things visible and invisible.

I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ,  
the Only Begotten Son of God,  
born of the Father before all ages.  
God from God, Light from Light,  
true God from true God,  
begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father;  
through him all things were made.  
For us men and for our salvation  
he came down from heaven,

(all bow during the next three lines)

and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary,  
and became man.

For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate,  
he suffered death and was buried,  
and rose again on the third day  
in accordance with the Scriptures.  
He ascended into heaven  
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.  
He will come again in glory  
to judge the living and the dead  
and his kingdom will have no end.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord,  
the giver of life,  
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,  
who with the Father and the Son is adored  
and glorified,  
who has spoken through the prophets.

I believe in one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church.  
I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins  
and I look forward to the resurrection of the dead  
and the life of the world to come.  
Amen.

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

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.  
Amen.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

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

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.  
Amen.

In this hour of farewell, or, better, of leave-taking, I repeat once more that what matters most in this life is: our blessed Jesus Christ, his holy Church, his Gospel, and in the Gospel above all else the Our Father according to the mind and heart of Jesus, and the truth and goodness of his Gospel, goodness which must be meek and kind, hardworking and patient, unconquerable and victorious.

(St John XXIII: Spiritual Testament)

# Sunday Message

TWENTY-THIRD SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

THE WORD

Year A • 6 September 2026 • Colour: Green • Psalter Week 3



## LESSONS IN PEACEMAKING

MT 18:15-20

Today's Gospel offers practical advice on dealing with disagreements within the community. The early Christians did not just gather for the Eucharist or for common prayer. They often lived in the same area of a town or city.

They shared their property with one another, looked after their sick, and kept an open door for other Christians on their travels. In such close-knit communities, disagreements between individuals can poison the atmosphere for others.

Jesus proposes a three-step process to solve such disputes. In step one, those in disagreement are expected to meet to clear the air. This reminds us of Jesus' advice in the Sermon on the Mount that if 'you are offering your gift at the altar, if you remember that your brother or sister has something against you... first be reconciled to your brother or sister, and then come and offer your gift.'

If this doesn't work, the disputants should invite two or three others to act as brokers. If this fails, the third step is to submit the dispute to a meeting of the whole church community to find a solution. If either party refuses to accept mediation, they are to be excluded. This is a drastic step, but it recognises that if action is not taken and bitterness is allowed to simmer, it has the potential to destroy the life of a close-knit community.

Jesus is reminding us that, as Christians, we must never turn a blind eye to anything that harms another person or damages the community. To really love another means sometimes having to say difficult and painful things. It means speaking candidly and honestly, even at the risk of losing the friendship. It means sometimes having to show tough love. ■

REFLECT

The Reverend Harold Good is one of the main architects of the Irish peace process. A former president of the Methodist Church in Ireland, he was, with Fr Alex Reid, one of two independent eyewitnesses to the decommissioning of IRA arms in 2005. For decades, he worked quietly behind the scenes to bring the opposing sides together. During that time, he learned several lessons about reconciliation and peacemaking, lessons he has also used to help resolve conflicts in Spain and Colombia. He calls them his four T's.

The first T stands for 'talk.' Without the willingness to talk, to engage with the other, conflict resolution will be impossible. Whether it is a violent conflict like the 'Troubles' or a local or family dispute, dialogue is the only effective dynamic for peaceful conflict resolution. Real dialogue

involves face-to-face communication between those in conflict. The first and most important part of dialogue is listening. Its purpose is to uncover common ground that will enable all concerned to build an agreement that resolves their conflict. For agreement to take place, there must be a willingness to sit down and talk.

The second T stands for 'truth.' If talks are to be fruitful, they must be honest. Both sides must be completely sincere with each other, however uncomfortable that might be. If we are not upfront with each other, if we don't speak our truth clearly and honestly, then mistrust will remain, and any lasting understanding or agreement will be impossible.

The third T is 'trust.' Without trust, there can be no resolution or settlement. If we doubt the sincerity of the other side, or they doubt our truthfulness and sincerity, deep

SAY

"Lord, help me to speak your truth at all times. Amen."

DO

How do you respond when arguments or disputes break out? Are you a peacemaker?

PRAY

It is not easy to challenge someone or point out their faults. Pray for the strength to take the loving course of action in your dealings with others.



LEARN

As Christians, we have a responsibility for each other. We have a duty to point out each other's wrongdoing, and to do all we can to promote forgiveness and reconciliation

True love hurts sometimes

suspensions will remain, and peacemaking will fail.

The fourth T is 'time.' To build trust, one must be prepared to invest as much time as it takes. Patience is necessary. It took many, many years before the parties in the North trusted one another enough to sign the Good Friday Agreement. The four Ts made agreement possible.

Harold Good often adds a fifth T: 'tea.' If people are willing to literally break bread together, reaching an agreement or settlement will be more likely. Table fellowship helps to break down barriers.

Rev Good's lessons mirror Jesus' advice for resolving disputes. No matter what dispute we find ourselves caught up in, we must trust in God's presence, be willing to talk and speak the truth, and be ready to spend time listening. ■