

## Gospel Reflection

In answering God's call to be a prophet, Ezekiel took on a serious duty. Just as the watchman sounded a trumpet to warn the citizens of impending danger, so was it the prophet's responsibility to warn the people to repent. If the townsfolk ignored the watchman's trumpet and were taken by the enemy, the watchman was not to blame. Yet in the task of warning the people, the watchman was responsible for the welfare of the entire community. In the same way, the prophet only needed to deliver the message. What the listeners did upon receiving it was their own choice. Nevertheless, the prophet's responsibility to the community was clear. To shirk that duty would be a disservice to all.

In Paul's Letter to the Romans, he tells us to go beyond the letter of God's law to its heart, which is love. What the fourth through tenth commandments really challenge us to do is love our neighbor. As Paul points out and as the Gospel clarifies, we cannot do this passively or by choosing not to get involved.

Loving one another is not easy to do. There will always be those whose actions damage and disrupt the community and cause harm to the world at large. It is our responsibility to challenge those actions and shed the light of the gospel on them, but to do so in a loving way. In a culture where public sentiment can run strong, demonstrating such restraint and respect may feel like swimming upstream. Yet today's Gospel invites us not to condemn out of hand, but to engage in a dialogue with the offender that can result in conversion and change. To fail to do so is to shrink from our Christian responsibility. In the light of today's Gospel, what do you think could be the appropriate Christian responses to the many different actions of relatives, friends, fellow citizens, and government authorities in the past year?

## KEEPING FAITH FIRST FAMILY FUN

*Matthew 18:15-20*

P R A Y N S Q O T H K Y B  
 R L I S T E N Q A E K L K  
 K E B T L S S R X A V E R  
 C Q H O V U V A C V A Q W  
 N H O T D F O M O E H I U  
 E S U N O E I E L N T Y P  
 E E I R T R L Y L N T O Z  
 F B R M C I B F E X B I Q  
 X R W G T H D S C L X O Y  
 S Q X N A D S H T R A E T  
 N U E Y T E X M O R Q P R  
 I G J V S K H S R K A U Q  
 S R G D L D E R E H T A G

**Find these words from the Gospel passage.**

AGREE	BIND	BROTHER
CHURCH	EARTH	GATHERED
GENTILE	HEAVEN	LISTEN
LOOSE	PRAY	REFUSES
SINS	TAX COLLECTOR	WITNESSES

## Disciple's Reflection & Questions of the Week

*The Twenty-Third Sunday in Ordinary Time  
9/7/2008*

*Matthew 18:15-20  
Faith-Sharing  
Questions of the Week*



***Our Lady of the Assumption***

435 Berkeley Ave.  
Claremont, CA  
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## Call to Prayer

*We begin by calling upon God:*

**In the Name of the Father,  
and of the Son, and of the  
Holy Spirit, Amen.**

*We then pause for a moment to listen with  
our hearts to this week's Gospel passage...*

**The Word of God:** *Matthew 18:15-20*

### ***The Gospel according to Matthew***

Jesus said to his disciples: "If your brother sins **against you**, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have **won over** your brother. If he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, so that 'every fact may be established on the testimony of **two or more witnesses**.'

If he refuses to listen to them, tell **the church**. If he refuses to listen even to the church, then treat him as you would a **Gentile or a tax-collector**. Amen, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. Again, amen, I say to you, if two of you agree on earth about anything for which they are to pray, it shall be granted to them by my heavenly Father. For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them."

***The Gospel of the Lord***



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### **Gospel Glossary**

**Against You:** Some translations omit this phrase.

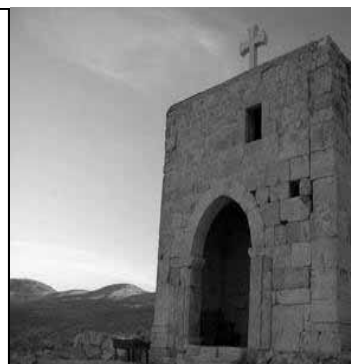
**Won Over:** Also translated as "gained"

**Two or More Witnesses:** This standard of testimony is derived from *Deuteronomy* 19:15.

**The Church:** The second of two uses of this term in Matthew's gospel, it here refers not to the entire Church but rather to a local congregation.

**Gentile or Tax Collector:** This phrase likely points to the fact that the audience to which the author of this gospel is writing was composed mostly of Jewish Christians. It thus serves as a metaphor (comprehensible to such an audience) for a certain type of unrepentant sinner who can appropriately be excluded from life in the community.

"For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them."



## Faith Sharing

### **Questions of the Week**

- How am I a servant of God's reconciliation in my personal life?
- What motivates me to compassionately correct others?
- When have I needed to be corrected by my friends, family and community? How did the experience help me to reconcile with God and with others?

## Closing Prayer

Lord our God,

In you justice and mercy meet. With unparalleled love you have saved us from death and drawn us into the circle of your life. Open our eyes to the wonders this life sets before us, that we may serve you free from fear and address you as God our Father. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

Amen

**Twenty-Third Sunday in Ordinary Time**