



23RD SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME YEAR A – September 10, 2017

In the first reading, today (Ezekiel 33:7-9), God reminds us that we are responsible for each other, not just for ourselves. He says if we do not speak out to dissuade our brothers and sisters who are in denial about their sinful ways, *we will be held responsible* for their spiritual death. You can almost hear the modern response to that challenge. That's not my job. It's the job of someone who is qualified to do that. God doesn't always call people who are qualified, but he always qualifies people who are called.

St. Paul reminds us in the second reading (Rom 13:8-10) that we must fulfill our call from God the way Jesus fulfilled his call. That means we are to love others the way Jesus loves us - and that includes forgiveness. If we do not forgive others, we will not be forgiven *by God*.

In the gospel (Mt. 18:15-20), Jesus tells us how to go about the business of fraternal correction.

There is a natural tendency to think that we are not qualified to do that. I'm reminded of that clever psychological evaluation of the apostles that was printed several years ago. It's addressed to Jesus and it goes something like this:

"Dear Sir:

Thank you for submitting the resumes of the 12 men you have picked for management positions in your new organization. All of them have now taken our battery of tests and we can give you the results.

It is the opinion of our staff that most of your nominees are lacking in background, education and vocational aptitude for the type of enterprise you are undertaking.

***Simon Peter** is emotionally unstable and given to fits of temper - definitely not the man you would want to head your organization. **Andrew** has absolutely no quality of leadership - he is just a follower. The two brothers, **James and John** are too hot-headed. **Thomas** demonstrates a questioning attitude that would undermine company morale. **Matthew**, the tax-collector is undoubtedly a man of ability but would project the wrong image for an organization such as yours. **James**, son of Alphaeus and **Thaddeus** have radical leanings and are unsuitable.*

*There is one candidate who shows great potential. He is a man of ability and resourcefulness, good with people, has a keen business mind, and has contacts in high places. He is highly motivated, ambitious and responsible. That man is **Judas Iscariot**. We recommend him as your controller and right hand man. We wish you every success in your new venture.*

Sincerely yours - Jordan Management Consultants."

When Jesus asks us to follow him, we may feel at times that we are not qualified. But remember this: Jesus doesn't call those who are qualified, he qualifies those he calls. *You are called! You are qualified!* "If today you hear his voice, harden not your heart. (Responsorial Psalm 95:1-2,6-7,8-9)

