

BREAKING OPEN THE WORD



Fr. Thomas M. Pastorius

September 7, 2014

Twenty-third Sunday in Ordinary Time

Lectionary: 127

Gospel [mt 18:15-20](#)

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 three 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."

Spiritual Reflection:

"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." If one is not careful, one can read this passage as an excuse to treat someone poorly if they do not change their behavior but the catch here is that Jesus taught us to love tax collectors and gentiles. Even when someone does something bad, you are still required to love (want what is best for them) them. Unconditional love means there is never a reason not to love someone.

Spiritual Question:

1. Name a time in which you felt like you could not forgive someone but later was able to.
2. How does Jesus want us to treat tax collectors and sinners?
3. What if Jesus gave up on us when we refuse to listen?
4. Do you ask people to pray with you?
5. If so why? If not why not?