

SAINT MARY MAGDALEN SMALL GROUPS



Twenty-third Sunday in Ordinary Time | Sunday, September 6, 2020

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."

Reading 1 [EZ 33:7-9](#)

Reading 2 [ROM 13:8-10](#)

We can sum up this week's Readings and Gospel in this way: Conflict is inevitable, but conflict can be reconcilable – when love is the response. And in this response, we are shown that we are responsible for one another, *and to one another*.

Pope Francis "[Laudato Si](#)" brings the same message: We are created and called to love each other – and to love the common home we share. We are called to be Stewards of Creation, practicing the stewardship of love. As a parish, Saint Mary Magdalen is reflecting upon the Holy Father's encyclical. This month, we are referencing Chapter 2: The Gospel of Creation.

Laudato Si – 70

These ancient stories, full of symbolism, bear witness to a conviction which we today share, that everything is interconnected, and that genuine care for our own lives and our relationships with nature is inseparable from fraternity, justice and faithfulness to others.

SCRIPTURE REFLECTIONS & DISCUSSION

In the first reading, Ezekiel the “watchman” is responsible to bring the message of God to others, and to set them on a path away from sin.

- **Have you ever tried to intercede in the life of another who about to make a decision that would have major consequences? How can we love someone well enough to encourage them away from sin?**

In the second reading, St. Paul proclaims: the commandments can be summed up in this: “You shall love your neighbor as yourself” ... love is the fulfillment of the law”. After loving God, our next greatest responsibility is to love people.

- **Discuss this law of love and the Ten Commandments – Paul essentially tells us that we can be exemplary in all the “shall nots”and never get to the “thou shoulds”. Paul says aim for love. If you are on target, all the laws will be honored as well. But it doesn’t work in reverse – you can follow all the rules, but may have no love.**

Matthew Chapter 18 is part of Jesus discourse on life in the church. If someone sins, no effort must be spared to reform the sinner and keep community harmony. Jesus adds, when two or three members pray on an issue, their decision will be affirmed in heaven.

- **Talk out the 3-step process Jesus teaches for resolving conflict. How does this bring understanding to how you read Chapter 2 of *Laudato Si*, in which the pope is speaking directly about the “convictions of believers” [LS-62] and the responsibility we carry? *LS-66. ... that human life is grounded in three fundamental and closely intertwined relationships: with God, with our neighbour and with the earth itself.***

LIVING THE GOSPEL MESSAGE – How do I handle conflict in my life?

Jesus does not tell us to avoid or cover up conflict, but to face it. To bring reconciliation to the world, we must be willing to enter into intense and fruitful dialogue. [LS-62]

- **Do I run away or ignore conflict? Do I create conflict forcing my own will? Where is God in my conflict resolution process and patterns?**
- **Do you or people in your life ever show “lack of interest. Obstructionist attitudes, . . . denial of the problem, . . . indifference, nonchalant resignation or blind confidence in technical solutions.” to problems and conflict in our world? Why do you think this is?**
- **Have a calm, loving conversation with someone you disagree with. Recognize their good intentions, even if you disagree with their solutions - find common ground. (What good do they desire? What are they afraid of? Where do you agree?)**

A Christian Prayer in Union with Creation

God of love, show us our place in this world
as channels of your love
for all the creatures of this earth,
for not one of them is forgotten in your sight.
Enlighten those who possess power and money
that they may avoid the sin of indifference,
that they may love the common good, advance the weak,
and care for this world in which we live.
The poor and the earth are crying out.
O Lord, seize us with your power and light,
help us to protect all life,
to prepare for a better future,
for the coming of your Kingdom
of justice, peace, love and beauty.
Praise be to you!
Amen.

Oración cristiana con la creación

Dios de amor,
muéstranos nuestro lugar en este mundo
como instrumentos de tu cariño
por todos los seres de esta tierra,
porque ninguno de ellos está olvidado ante ti.
Ilumina a los dueños del poder y del dinero
para que se guarden del pecado de la indiferencia,
amen el bien común, promuevan a los débiles,
y cuiden este mundo que habitamos.
Los pobres y la tierra están clamando:
Señor, tómanos a nosotros con tu poder y tu luz,
para proteger toda vida,
para preparar un futuro mejor,
para que venga tu Reino
de justicia, de paz, de amor y de hermosura.
Alabado seas.
Amén.

- Pope Francis, *Laudato Si'*: On Care for Our Common Home