

23rd Sunday of Ordinary Time

Ezekiel 33:7-9
 Ps 95:1-2, 6-9
 Romans 13:8-10
 Matthew 18:15-20

Monday September 7

1 Corinthians 5:1-8
 Ps 5:5-7, 12
 Luke 6:6-11

Tuesday September 8 Birth of the Virgin Mary

Micah 5:1-4a
 or Romans 8:28-30
 Ps 13:6
 Matthew 1:1-16, 18-23

Wednesday September 9 St. Peter Claver

1 Corinthians 7:25-31
 Ps 45:11-12, 14-17
 Luke 6:20-26

Thursday September 10

1 Corinthians 8:1b-7, 11-13
 Ps 139:1b-3, 13-14ab, 23-24
 Luke 6:27-38

Friday September 11

1 Corinth 9:16-19, 22b-27
 Ps 84:3-6, 12
 Luke 6:39-42

Saturday September 12 Holy Name of Mary

1 Corinthians 10:14-22
 Ps 116:12-13, 17-18
 Luke 6:43-49

This Sunday's readings all speak of the need to stand up for what is holy and right and true in a way that invites others to turn away from sin. If we don't, we indirectly play a part in the sins he or she commits, and we *will* be held accountable (see the first reading).

If we do take a stand against sin but without compassion and mercy and unconditional love, that too is a sin (the second reading).

Jesus shows us in the Gospel reading that in our efforts to stop a fellow Christian from sinning, it's important to rely on our Christian community for advocacy and prayer support.

How?

First, we speak to the sinner. When we know that someone is harming himself and others (all sins are harmful even when we can't see the harm), if we don't try to impart this knowledge to him or her at least once, our silence is un-

loving and uncaring.

Once we've shared the truth, even if the sinner does not change, we're free of any guilt. But we must not stop trying, and so we take one or two others with us in a stronger effort to help the sinner understand and repent.

And if that fails, we try again with still more backing.



When every attempt to help someone has failed, only then do we quit. In reality, it's not us who's walking away. The sinner is the one who has chosen the path of separation. However, remember how Jesus treated the Gentiles and tax collectors (i.e., the outsiders, the separated ones): He never stopped loving them. He still chose to die for them.

Reflect & Discuss:

1. Whose sins have greatly disturbed you lately?
2. What have you done about it? How loving and caring have you been while handling it?
3. What bothers you about the way some people have pointed out your sins or the sins of others? How could they have been more compassionate?
4. Share the story of a time when someone successfully led another into repentance and growth. Explain why the effort was effective.