

**The 23rd Sunday in Ordinary Time**  
September 10, 2017

**First Reading - Ezekiel 33:7-9**

Thus says the LORD:  
You, son of man,  
I have appointed watchman for the house of Israel;  
when you hear me say anything,  
you shall warn them for me.  
If I tell the wicked, "O wicked one,  
you shall surely die, "  
and you do not speak out  
to dissuade the wicked from his way,  
the wicked shall die for his guilt,  
but I will hold you responsible for his death.  
But if you warn the wicked,  
trying to turn him from his way,  
and he refuses to turn from his way,  
he shall die for his guilt,  
but you shall save yourself.

**Second Reading - Romans 13:8-10**

Brothers and sisters:  
Owe nothing to anyone, except to love one another;  
for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law.  
The commandments, "You shall not commit adultery;  
you shall not kill; you shall not steal;  
you shall not covet, "  
and whatever other commandment there may be,  
are summed up in this saying, namely,  
"You shall love your neighbor as yourself."  
Love does no evil to the neighbor;  
hence, love is the fulfillment of the law.

**Gospel - Matthew 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."



**Psalm 95**

*If today you hear his voice, harden not your hearts.*

Come, let us sing joyfully to the LORD;  
let us acclaim the rock of our salvation.  
Let us come into his presence with thanksgiving;  
let us joyfully sing psalms to him.

Come, let us bow down in worship;  
let us kneel before the LORD who made us.  
For he is our God,  
and we are the people he shepherds,  
the flock he guides.

Oh, that today you would hear his voice:  
"Harden not your hearts as at Meribah,  
as in the day of Massah in the desert,  
where your fathers tempted me;  
they tested me though they had seen my works."

**Words from our Holy Father**

In this way, the invocation for world peace, emanating from the tomb of St Peter, will extend throughout the earth. Let us be confident that the promise of the Lord may be fulfilled: "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".

-Pope Francis, *But who do you say that I am?*

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**Amazing Grace**

Amazing grace, how sweet the sound  
That saved a wretch like me  
I once was lost, but now am found  
was blind, but now I see

Twas grace that taught my heart to fear  
and grace my fears relieved  
How precious did that grace appear  
the hour I first believed

The Lord has promised good to me  
His word my hope secures  
He will my shield and portion be  
As long as life endures

Text: St. 1-4, John Newton, 1725-1807; st. 5 attr. to John Rees, fl.1859  
Tune: NEW BRITAIN, CM; *Virginia Harmony*, 1831; acc. by Diana Kodner, b.1957

**Lord, I Need You**

Lord, I come, I confess. Bowing here I find my rest  
Without You I fall apart  
You're the One that guides my heart

**Lord, I need You, oh, I need You.**  
**Every hour I need You**  
**My one defense, my righteousness**  
**Oh God, how I need You**

Where sin runs deep Your grace is more  
Where grace is found is where You are  
And where You are, Lord, I am free  
Holiness is Christ in me

Teach my song to rise to You  
When temptation comes my way  
And when I cannot stand I'll fall on You  
Jesus, You're my hope and stay

Matt Maher

**“Ground Rules” for Small Group Faith Sharing**

Maintain confidentiality – “Whatever happens in small group stays in small group.”

Judgment-free zone – You don't have to agree with everyone, but you have to have respect for everyone.

No “shut downs” or “put downs” – See Christ in one another, BE Christ to one another.

Don't be a “discussion hog” – Be sure that everyone that wants to gets a chance to share.

Leave room for the Spirit – Silence is OK! Not everyone has to share.

Practice active listening – Avoid interrupting, fidgeting, criticizing, lecturing, or thinking of what you're going to say while another person is speaking.

Questions are a guide - You do not have to answer all of them or go in order.

Be open – God is doing amazing things!

**Petitions**

Our response: Lord, let us hear your voice.

**Closing Prayer**

Immigrants, refugees, starvation, threat of war, global warming, homelessness . . . Lord, what can we possibly do? “If two of you agree on earth about anything you ask, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven.”

Christ, lord of love, let us not think twice. Let us trust in your words and trust in one another. Let us come together in solidarity and pray as one, knowing that you are here. In your name we pray. Amen.

**Questions for Reflection on the Gospel**

1. What word, image, or phrase stands out to you from the Gospel?
2. In the Gospel, we are called to confront others when they hurt us. Name a time when you went to someone who hurt you. What happened? How did you feel? What happened afterward?
3. Can you rely on God to grant your request in some way when you and another person agree to pray about something? Do you trust God's promise?
4. Have you ever had an experience with God when you gathered with others? When was it? What was it like?
5. In his statement on the front page, Pope Francis thought it was important enough to send out an urgent request for all Catholics to join him in prayer when he met with leaders from Israel and Palestine to pray for world peace. Do you always remember that “if two or you agree on earth about anything for which they (you) are to pray, it shall be granted to them (you)”?
6. In the first reading, we hear about an appointed watchman. Does God still send watchmen or watchwomen or prophets to address injustice in the world today? Who are they? Are you one of them in some way?
7. In the second reading, we hear the commandment that sums up all the rest. How does it fulfill the whole law?
8. In our society, which ranks highest: How much you love? How much you do? How smart or powerful you are? Which would rank highest if Jesus was asked?