



Daily Reflections

August 16, 2017

Scripture

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"

Our Scripture Reflection

Today's text comes from a section of Matthew's Gospel on "Fraternal Correction." Interesting, it also served as the Scriptural basis for what is known as "Ex-Communication." Please note: The goal of Jesus' teaching was to win back the brother who had sinned. Unfortunately, throughout history the focus was often on punishment rather than reconciliation. Jesus, however, wants the Church to pray and work for healing and unity.

Food for your Journey

To face his shame, the alcoholic stands up at [an Alcoholics Anonymous] meeting and declares himself to be an alcoholic. He is not seeking sympathy, and will not receive any. His membership in the group requires that he continually make the effort to overcome his alcoholism and to avoid behaviors that are associated with it. He is accepted as an honorable member of the community -- his behavior is not policed. His sobriety is based not only on his ability to feel shame for having been an alcoholic but also on his capacity to reconstruct his life in the world. ...

While shame may make you feel that nothing can be done, in fact, it is directing you to do something. You may apologize, you may hide your face, you may resign your office; also, you must resolve to act differently in the future and keep scrupulously to this resolve. These are actions that overcome shame.

--Stuart Schneiderman, *Saving Face: America and the Politics of Shame* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1995), 274-276.

A Prayer from the Heart

Dear Jesus, Please make me an instrument of Your Peace. Where there is injury and hurt, let me bring Your love. Amen.