



Daily Reflections

September 10, 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 Gospel text has served as the scriptural basis for the discipline known as "ex-communication." Unfortunately, there have been occasions throughout history when the discipline was practiced contrary to the desires of Jesus with punishment as the primary focus. Please note: The goal of the confrontation with the erring member is to get him/her to listen, and hopefully, to change their ways for the good. Jesus' Church is His Body here on earth. Each member is to be treated with dignity and respect because Jesus died for all. May we always keep this in mind.

Food for your Journey

Maybe we should rethink our strategy in the culture war Instead of hurling rhetorical grenades, we should support programs for reading the classics in schools, getting people to think about enduring moral and spiritual themes. For too long many Christians have tried to have an impact through political activism alone. The lesson of the current scandals is that the nation's wound runs much deeper than politics. Politics is an expression of a culture, and throwing out a president (or censuring him) will change little if he is merely a reflection of America's own values.

--Charles Colson & Nancy Pearcey, "Moral Education After Monica," Christianity Today, March 1, 1999, 104.

Most of us can use some moral bolstering. One of the great theologians of this century, Professor Abraham Joshua Heschel, once gave a lecture at the University of California on the relationship between religion and ethics. When he had concluded his remarks, a faculty member stood and asked, "Why do I need religion? I am a good person. I treat others decently. I lead an honest and ethical life. What does religion have to offer me?" Professor Heschel replied, "That is the difference between you and me. You are a good person. I am not." Religion can heighten our awareness of our moral imperfection -- not to undermine us, but to give us a target to shoot for.

--Aaron Hass, *Doing the Right Thing* (New York: Pocket Books, 1998), 50.

A Prayer from the Heart

Dear Jesus, You gave Your life for the salvation of all people. May I always strive to show Your merciful love to others, especially those who have hurt me. Amen.