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 reading is one of the texts used in support of the ancient practice of “excommunication.” Unfortunately, as the practice evolved through the years, emphasis was placed on the punitive dimension of the discipline. However, that is not what Our Lord intended. Jesus tells us that great care must be given to “Win your brother over”, something often forgotten by the purely legalistic minded.

Food for your Journey
Twenty percent of all conflicts are due to a difference of opinion.
Eighty percent of all conflicts are due to tone of voice.
--Anonymous.
Conflict cannot continue without your participation.
--Anonymous.
Sometimes, God doesn't send you into a battle to win it; God sends you to end it.
--Shannon L. Alder.

A Prayer from the Heart

Dear God, Make me an instrument of your peace.
Where there is hatred, let me bring love.
Where there is offense, let me bring pardon.
Where there is discord, let me bring union.
Where there is error, let me bring truth.
Where there is doubt, let me bring faith.
Where there is despair, let me bring hope.
Where there is darkness, let me bring your light.
Where there is sadness, let me bring joy.
O Master, let me not seek as much
to be consoled as to console,
to be understood as to understand,
to be loved as to love,
for it is in giving that one receives,
it is in self-forgetting that one finds,
it is in pardoning that one is pardoned,
it is in dying that one is raised to eternal life. Amen