

Lord, you draw us into the circle of your life!

Ezekiel 33:7-9

Psalm 95:1-2,6-9

Romans 13:8-10

Matthew 18:15-20

In the first reading Ezekiel is given the responsibility of being the watchman for the house of Israel. He must dissuade the wicked from acting by warning them else he will be responsible; once they are warned it is their responsibility and they will be held accountable.

The Psalmist comes to prayer with continuous thanksgiving as he bows down in worship, kneels before the Lord who made us and guides us. The Lord God is the rock of our salvation, and we need to cultivate sensitivity to his promptings and not ignore his guidance.

In the second reading Paul urges the Romans to truly show love to each other because in doing so we will respect the other commandments and even fulfill them. Owe nothing to anyone except love!

In the Gospel Jesus explains how to correct sinful persons; first give them personal advice and keep it private; if they don't listen bring another one or two along as witnesses; if there is still no correction bring it to the attention of the community, and if there is still a refusal rebuke them.

The Father sent the Son, our Guide

To understand our weaknesses by the promptings of the Holy Spirit.

The idea of Ezekiel as watchman and being held responsible for the deeds of the wicked if he is aware of their impending actions and fails to warn them is also a warning to us. It's not that we should seek out the wrongdoing of others, however when obvious wrongdoing comes to our attention it is our obligation to offer gentle correction quietly and confidentially rather than spread gossip of it to others. The psalmist reminds us to be diligent in our prayer life and listen to the promptings of the Spirit. Paul tells us to always act out of love and to offer gentle correction of another in the way that Jesus mentions. In this way we too rediscover the profound source of life and also help others discover it.

In the Gospel Jesus reminds us on how to treat the wrongdoings of others by simply correcting them privately and restricting the issue between yourself and them. This is not easy to do as it takes courage, patience, and sincerity. It is a lot easier to make known the shortcomings of others and start the rumor mill that eventually distorts the original issue. Prayer for the wrongdoer, after correction, will enable us to comprehend how God turns such things into a greater good. We need to be patient with others because we do many things that others must endure. If we cannot make ourselves perfect as we wish how can we expect others to behave according to our standards. We demand others be corrected but are often overlooking our own faults and sometimes unwilling to correct ourselves. None of us are without defect, none without a cross to bear; none of us are wise enough to be an island unto ourselves; we can instruct, admonish, and yet comfort, remembering our own weaknesses.

"Cleanse me from my unknown faults."(Psalm19:13)

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