

Alleluia, alleluia! / God was in Christ,  
to reconcile the world to himself; / and  
the Good News of reconciliation he has  
entrusted to us. / Alleluia!

## GOSPEL

Mt 18:15-20

A reading from the holy Gospel according to  
Matthew.

*If your brother or sister listens to you, you will have  
won that person back.*

Jesus said to his disciples: 'If your brother does  
something wrong, go and have it out with him  
alone, between your two selves. If he listens to  
you, you have won back your brother. If he does  
not listen, take one or two others along with  
you: the evidence of two or three witnesses is  
required to sustain any charge. But if he refuses  
to listen to these, report it to the community;  
and if he refuses to listen to the community,  
treat him like a pagan or a tax collector.

'I tell you solemnly, whatever you bind on  
earth shall be considered bound in heaven;  
whatever you loose on earth shall be considered  
loosed in heaven.

'I tell you solemnly once again, if two of you  
on earth agree to ask anything at all, it will be  
granted to you by my Father in heaven. For  
where two or three meet in my name, I shall be  
there with them.'

## ■ The Gospel of the Lord.

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# Breaking Open the Word



# THE SAVING WORD

TWENTY-THIRD SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME / A

10 SEPTEMBER 2023

## CONCERN FOR OTHERS

From time to time, we hear family counsellors  
speaking of the need for 'tough love', the sort  
of love that expresses itself by dealing head-on  
with the problems we are tempted to ignore.  
Often, we would do anything to avoid the  
risk of upsetting the other person. Of course,  
we all know that the problems are there but  
how do you go about confronting them in a  
constructive way? The readings for today give  
us some useful and powerful orientations.

As the people of Israel set up sentries to warn  
of the impending invasion by the Babylonians,  
Ezekiel was reminded of his own moral  
obligations as a sentry. His role was to speak  
the hard words of warning that would cause  
his contemporaries to rethink their values and  
get their inner house in order.

Matthew's own community had a process  
for naming issues and correcting them  
that respects both the individual and the  
community. If there is a problem in the  
community, its resolution needs to start on an  
individual level. Later, if it is necessary, the  
problem can be dealt with at the group level.

Paul highlights the obligation we have to each  
other in mutual love. Whether we warn each  
other as Ezekiel was called to do or correct  
someone, as was necessary in Matthew's  
community, it must come from our concern  
and love for the person. As he knows all too  
well it is only love that will not cause our  
brother or sister harm.

Christopher Monaghan CP

## FIRST READING

Ezek 33:7-9

A reading from the prophet Ezekiel

*If you have not warned the wicked man, then I will  
hold you responsible for his death.*

The word of the Lord was addressed to me as  
sentry to the House of Israel. When you hear a  
word from my mouth, warn them in my name.  
If I say to a wicked man: Wicked wretch, you  
are to die, and you do not speak to warn the  
wicked man to renounce his ways, then he shall  
die for his sin, but I will hold you responsible  
for his death. If, however, you do warn a wicked  
man to renounce his ways and repent, and he  
does not repent, then he shall die for his sin,  
but you yourself will have saved your life.'

## ■ The word of the Lord.

## RESPONSORIAL PSALM

Ps 94:1-2, 6-9. R. v. 8

**R. O that today you would listen to his  
voice!**

**Harden not your hearts.**

1. Come, ring out our joy to the Lord; / hail  
the rock who saves us. / Let us come before  
him, giving thanks, / with songs let us hail the  
Lord. **R.**
2. Come in; let us bow and bend low; / let us  
kneel before the God who made us / for he is  
our God and we / the people who belong to his  
pasture, / the flock that is led by his hand. **R.**
3. O that today you would listen to his  
voice! / 'Harden not your hearts as at  
Meribah, / as on that day at Massah in the  
desert / when your fathers put me to the test; /  
when they tried me, though they saw my  
work.' **R.**



## SECOND READING

Rom 13:8-10

A reading from the letter of St Paul to the  
Romans

*Love is the fulfilment of the Law.*

Avoid getting into debt, except the debt of  
mutual love. If you love your fellow men you  
have carried out your obligations. All the  
commandments: You shall not commit adultery,  
you shall not kill, you shall not steal, you shall  
not covet, and so on, are summed up in this  
single command: You must love your neighbour  
as yourself. Love is the one thing that cannot  
hurt your neighbour; that is why it is the answer  
to every one of the commandments.

## ■ The word of the Lord.