

## 23<sup>rd</sup> Sunday in Ordinary time -10<sup>th</sup> September 2023

Headings	Gospel(Matthew 18:15-20)	First Reading(Ezekiel 33: 7-9)	Second Reading(Romans 13: 8-10)
<b>Context</b>	Here Jesus is teaching his disciples how to deal with disputes in the community. The aim is to restore good relations.	In ancient times a watchman had the task of patrolling the walls or being present in the tower to warn the people of upcoming danger or enemies. God called Ezekiel to be a watchman to obey God's word and warn them not to stray from God's way.	In today's reading Paul refers to the 10 commandments given to Moses. The first 3 commandments point to our relationship with God. The fourth onwards are directed towards our relationship with others.
<b>Key verse</b>	<b>"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"</b>	<b>"Son of man, I have appointed you as sentry to the house of Israel. When you hear a word from my mouth warn them in my name"</b>	<b>" Love is the one thing that cannot hurt your neighbour, that is why it is the answer to every one of the commandments,"</b>
<b>Key themes/ messages</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jesus outlines a three-step process designed to restore sinners to the community when possible, or exclude them if necessary for health and safety of whole group,</li> <li>• There should be an attempt at private reconciliation initially, then further attempts with the assistance of others witnesses and lastly through Church Leaders.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is important to be on guard against evil influences today.</li> <li>• In the Church today leaders are expected to be on guard, like Ezekiel, for their followers. Parents have a similar role for their children.</li> <li>• Today's' psalm encourages us to be alert, to listen to the Lord, to offer worship and give thanks.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Paul summarizes 4 of the 7 commandments in the phrase " love your neighbor as yourself"</li> <li>• We are advised to avoid getting into debt and focus instead on mutual love.</li> <li>• Sometimes we can let such things damage our relationship with one another.</li> </ul>
<b>Questions/ application to our lives</b>	How do you handle disagreements or wrongs done to you by others, especially family? What pattern do you follow? How close to the model presented in this passage is your method? What are the limits of your own willingness to forgive? Do you wait for the offender to ask forgiveness, or do you look on forgiving others as a sign of weakness?	The response to the psalm <b>"O that today you would listen to his voice harden not your heart"</b> . Are we attentive in listening for his voice, or accepting encouragement from others to do so? In what way can we be a <b>"sentry"</b> or <b>"watchman"</b> "in our time?	What kind of debt is always outstanding and never paid off? How can we ever fulfill this law? What is your level of personal financial debt? Even though we live in an age of easy credit why should a Christian avoid remaining in debt? How does God want you to avoid debt in the future?
<b>Further reading</b>	<i>Catechism 1443-1445, 2842-2845</i>	<i>Catechism 1445</i>	<i>Catechism 2844-2845</i>