

**06 SEPTEMBER 2020**

**TWENTY-THIRD SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME**

**OPENING HYMN**

**Where two or three are gathered in my name,  
There am I, there am I,  
Where two or three are gathered in my name,  
There am I, in their midst, evermore.**

As a Church we belong to Christ's Body,  
We're a kingdom of love and charity,  
We're a city, a light to the nations,  
Yes, the people of promise are we!

*(or choose an appropriate alternate hymn)*

**OPENING PRAYER**

O God, by whom we are redeemed and receive adoption, look graciously upon Your beloved sons and daughters, that those who believe in Christ may receive true freedom and an everlasting inheritance. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, Your son, who lives and reigns with You in the unity of the Holy Spirit, One God, for ever and ever. Amen.

**FIRST READING:** Ezel 33:7-9

**RESPONSORIAL PSALM:** Ps 94:1-2, 6-9

**Our Response is:** O that today you would listen to his voice! Harden not your hearts.

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/**

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/**

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

**GOSPEL:** Mt 18:15-20

**REFLECTION:**

We have definitely experienced sin and broken relationships in our lives. Sometimes, these may take years to heal. If we live the values of Jesus and are open to the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives, then forgiveness, healing, mercy and reconciliation are possible as Jesus taught us.

In the first reading, God tells Ezekiel to remain faithful to his prophetic mission. He is to bring God's Word to his people. At times, the message may be unpleasant or he may even be needed to confront the wicked. In Matthew's gospel text for today, the church is to take the responsibility of confronting the sinful. Are we open to Jesus' invitation to bringing and receiving reconciliation? Are we open to building relationships? **Pause**

Today's enthronement Psalm 94 was sung as the Israelites went in procession to the temple. The leader called them to worship God (*let us bow and bend low; ... kneel before the God who made us*) as they entered His presence singing songs of praise and thanksgiving. We are all reminded that we must listen for the voice of God and follow it in our lives (*..Harden not your hearts*). In what areas of my life is God inviting me to change? **Pause**

Conflicts often arise among the community and the members of the church. There are bound to be misunderstandings or problems in relationships also. In the Church, reconciliation for sin and relationships ensures that the members grow in love and unity with Jesus and each other. Jesus' presence continues to help us to resolve conflicts and preserve the unity of the church. In our Cells and Associations, are there conflicts with decisions made on how we run things? Do I want my own preferences to be chosen and am I not ready to accept that of others? What we should remember is that Jesus is present in the community and we must keep the good of all ahead of our personal preferences and desires. This will help us to preserve the unity and reconciliation as Jesus desired. **Pause**

**PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL**

**Leader:** God invites each one of us as a community to be loving, forgiving and reconcile differences between us. Let us confidently bring our prayers to the Lord.

**Our response is: Heavenly Father, hear our prayer**

We pray for all the members of the Church, that we may be faithful in spreading peace and God's love in the community; **pause**; let us pray to the Lord...

We pray for all those in authority, that they may use their power to settle disputes, bring justice and promote the common good of all; **pause**; let us pray to the Lord...

We pray for all those who are sick and suffering, that they may experience God's mercy and healing; **pause**; let us pray to the Lord...

We pray for all those baptised, that as Christ's disciples, we may be humble to give and accept correction when the situation arises; **pause**; let us pray to the Lord...

**Leader:** Heavenly Father, through the redemptive work of your Son, You revealed Your love for us. Hear our prayers and grant us the grace to faithfully live Your Word in our lives. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Let us together at the Saviour's command and formed by Divine teaching, dare to say:  
*(All say the Lord's Prayer together)* Our Father...

### **CLOSING PRAYER**

O Lord, grant that your faithful people, whom You nourish and endow with life through Your Word, may so benefit from Your beloved Son's great gifts that we may merit an eternal share in His life. Who lives and reigns for ever and ever. Amen.

### **PRAYER FOR RELIEF FROM THE CORONAVIRUS**

Almighty and merciful God, who show Your love to all creation everywhere, hear graciously the prayers we make for all those affected by the Coronavirus in various parts of the world.

We come before You asking for a quick control of the outbreak, for a healing of those affected, for the victims and their families.

We pray for the doctors doing research that an effective vaccine to combat the sickness is speedily found.

We pray for the Government and health authorities that they take appropriate steps for the good of the people. We make this prayer through Christ our Lord. Amen.

### **CLOSING HYMN**

**We are one in the Spirit, we are one in the Lord, - 2**

And we'll pray that all unity may one day be restored.

**And they'll know we are Christians by our love, by our love,  
Yes, they'll know we are Christians by our love.**

*(or choose an appropriate alternate hymn)*