

TWENTY -THIRD SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME SEPT. 6, 020.

There is a story about the young couple who were married for six months and had their first fight. She said something that hurt him so he went over to the closet, pulled out a pair of pants and said, "I'll have you know I'm the one that wears these in this family!" she started to laugh and he said, "what is so funny?" she replied, "Those are my slacks!" He responded to his hurt with anger. She eased the tension with humor. But what does one do when someone in our faith community hurts us, sins against us or is doing something obviously wrong?

Ezekiel, St. Paul and Jesus in today's readings all combine to give us some guidelines.

Guide line #. 1 is this: Go to the person alone and have a one on one conversation. Have open dialogue. Often the person had no intention of hurting the other. E.g. one priest friend of mine once went to a restaurant and didn't notice a parishioner at another table. She was terribly offended that he didn't greet her. He honestly did not see her but no explanation would satisfy her. Unfortunately, it happens too often that people brood over injuries and talk to everyone about the person who hurt them. If we are honest about it, it is simply our pride that waits for the other to come to us to apologize. The Gospel instructs us to make the first move.

Guideline # 2. **"Seek assistance."** That is, take a third impartial person who can judge the situation unemotionally. E.g. One time a man had talked to his brother about his drinking to much. The brother brushed it off so he asked another priest. It worked and he went off to A.A. treatment.

Guideline #. 3. If the first two guidelines don't work, the third thing that is recommended is to refer it to the church. Ask for prayers for a "Special intention": and put it in the hands of God. I like the story about a young priest who had a very unreasonable pastor. In frustration he went to Pope John XX111 and asked advice. Pope John said, "My son, some problems are only solved by funerals!"

Guideline # 4 -Rules # 1, 2, & 3 must all be done in LOVE. St. Paul tells us, **"Owe nothing to anyone, except to love one another- That is the fulfilment of the Law."**

The night before Jesus died, he instructed his followers to love one another as he has loved us and he also prayed for unity among his followers -that we would all be one. That is why forgivingness and reconciliation are so important.

One of the most powerful stories I've read about happened a few years ago. A man in his forties abused a young boy and killed him to cover up his crime. He was caught and sent to prison. When the trial was going on the father of the criminal out of extreme embarrassment could not even look at the father of the young boy who was killed. So, after the trial the father of the young boy went to the home of the other father, walked in the back door and said, "Your sorrow is much greater than my sorrow. Here have a drink on me." And with that he pulled out a battle of whiskey and put it on the kitchen table. That's what you call communion- that is, a union of hearts!