

Cycle A – Twenty-Third Sunday in Ordinary Time, Sept. 6, 2026

“Whatever you bind on earth ...”

OPENING PRAYER (Psalm 95)

Leader: O come, let us sing to the Lord;
let us make a joyful noise to the rock
of our salvation.

**All: Let us come into God’s presence with thanksgiving;
let us make joyful noise with songs of praise.**

Leader: O come, let us worship and bow down,
let us kneel before the Lord, our Maker.

**All: For he is our God,
and we are the people of his pasture.
Amen.**

Gospel Reading – Matthew 18:15-20

Matthew gives a concrete illustration of Ezekiel’s role as a sentinel and Paul’s call to love our neighbor. Sharing Ezekiel’s hope for reconciliation and a change of heart, Matthew lays out a process to use when division and disagreement jeopardize the unity of the faith community. The deep commitment to always reaching out in love is paramount, taking precedence over a desire to condemn and cast out. Such structures of accountability are grounded in love and serve to strengthen the community and heal any ruptures which may occur.

1. Jesus demonstrates her what it means to admonish someone, is this a successful way to point out the fault of a sister or brother in Christ out of love for them?
2. How have you seen Matthew’s approach to resolving disagreements in action?
3. How do we “bind and loose” one another in daily relationships?
4. Have you ever had to advise someone to change an unhealthy practice using this method that St. Matthew imprints for us? If so what was the result and would you attempt similar interventions in future circumstances.

LIVING THE WORD

God’s challenge – Make an effort to have a conversation with someone who holds very different views from your own regarding faith. Reflect and share the experience with your small group.

PRAYING THE WORD

Intercession: For those afraid or in denial of the truth, for those whose views and life choices cause divisions with their loved ones, and for all who work for peace and reconciliation in the world. We pray to the Lord.

(Invite personal intentions, ending with "Our Father...")

Concluding Prayer:

*Leader: Holy God, out of love for us
you warn us and caution us about
destructive choices and wrong living.*

**All: Open our heart so we may hear
your admonishments with love.**

*Leader: Fill us with this your love especially
in our attempts to resolve differences and disagreements.*

**All: Help us to use the power of binding and loosing wisely
according to your divine will, not ours. Amen.**

Leader: Let us share with one another a sign of Christ's peace.