

23rd Sunday in Ordinary Time (Year A)



Matthew 18:15-20

‘If he listens to you, you have gained your brother.’

At that time: Jesus said to his disciples, ‘If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother. But if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, that every charge may be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses. If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church. And if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector. Truly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. Again I say to you, if two of you agree on earth about anything they ask, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven. For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them.’

Reflection

Relationships are not always easy. Friends fall out, misunderstandings happen, and people sometimes hurt one another. In today's Gospel, Jesus teaches us that when conflict arises, our goal should not be to win an argument or prove that we are right. Our goal should be reconciliation. Jesus encourages us to speak honestly and directly, seeking to repair relationships rather than allowing resentment to grow. This takes courage, humility, and a willingness to listen as well as speak.

As Vincentians, we are called to build communities where everyone feels valued and respected.

St Vincent de Paul understood that charity is not just about helping people materially; it is also about creating relationships rooted in kindness, patience, and understanding. When we make the effort to forgive, listen, and work through disagreements, we help create the kind of community Jesus imagined.

The Gospel ends with a reminder that Jesus is present whenever people gather in His name. Whether we are serving others, praying together, or supporting one another through challenges, Christ is at the centre of our community.

Materials needed

- Printed Bricks
- Pens
- Large sheet of paper or a wall display

Activity

Give each person a paper "brick" (a rectangle cut from coloured paper or card). In the centre of a large sheet, write:

"What helps a community stay united?"

Ask everyone to write or draw on their brick one quality that helps people build strong, healthy relationships. Ideas might include:

- Listening
- Forgiveness
- Respect

Once everyone has finished, invite them to come forward and add their brick to a wall on the large sheet. As the wall grows, discuss how each quality plays an important role in creating a strong community. When the wall is complete, ask:

- Which bricks are most important when disagreements happen?
- Which qualities do we need more of in our Youth SVP group?
- How can we help build a community where everyone feels welcomed, valued, and heard?

Call to Action

This week, choose one of the qualities from the wall and make a conscious effort to put it into practice in your relationships at home, school, or in your community.

