

Reading for 23rd Sunday in Ordinary Time

6th September 2026

First reading

Ezekiel 33:7-9

‘If you do not speak to warn the wicked, his blood I will require at your hand.’

Thus says the Lord: ‘So you, son of man, I have made a watchman for the house of Israel. Whenever you hear a word from my mouth, you shall give them warning from me. If I say to the wicked, O wicked one, you shall surely die, and you do not speak to warn the wicked to turn from his way, that wicked person shall die in his iniquity, but his blood I will require at your hand. But if you warn the wicked to turn from his way, and he does not turn from his way, that person shall die in his iniquity, but you will have delivered your soul.’

Responsorial Psalm

Ps 95(94):1-2. 6-7b. 7c-9. R7c, 8a

O that today you would listen to his voice!

‘Harden not your hearts.’

Come, let us ring out our joy to the Lord; hail the rock who saves us.

Let us come into his presence, giving thanks; let us hail him with a song of praise.

O come; let us bow and bend low.

Let us kneel before the Lord who made us, for he is our God, and we the people,
the people of his pasture, the flock of his hand.

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 forebears put me to the test; when they tried me, though they saw my work.’

Second reading

Romans 13:8-10

‘Love is the fulfilling of the law.’

Brothers and Sisters: Owe no one anything, except to love each other. For the one who loves another has fulfilled the law. For the commandments, ‘You shall not commit adultery, You shall not murder, You shall not steal, You shall not covet’, and any other commandment, are summed up in this word: ‘You shall love your neighbour as yourself.’ Love does no wrong to a neighbour; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.

Gospel Acclamation

2 Corinthians 5:19

Alleluia, alleluia.

God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself,
and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation.

Alleluia.

Gospel

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.'

Short reflection on the reading for today

A reconciled community: Today's readings confront us with two aspects of the question. Firstly the need for a sense of individual responsibility in the way of conversion. Ezekiel certainly made it clear that the individual is addressed by the Word of God calling for repentance. There is no way out of this personal responsibility.

But all of this should not be seen simply in terms of what the individual owes to the community. The whole Church is called to be supportive of each person who seeks reconciliation. This is especially important in a world where so many people feel threatened by the alienating force of impersonal state structures. The Church is not called to be mega-corporation.

Individuals who are perplexed by their own failures or oppressed by the weaknesses of others, need a community that does not drive them further into isolation but one which calls them through forgiveness and love into the life of fellowship. Living in this fellowship does mean that we owe debts to one another, and as Paul reminds us today the only obligation that ultimately counts is the debt of love we owe one another.

This reconciled community will be an effective sign to the world not because it creates a superficial harmony, but because it faces the reality of sin in itself. It finds forgiveness as the solution to this threat. Renewal of the ministry of reconciliation in the Church increasingly takes the form of communal services of penance, linked to the celebration of the sacrament. This is an effective way of bringing home to people that all sin affects the community and reconciliation must include the community.