

## A READING FROM THE BOOK OF EZEKIEL

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.’

## THE WORD OF THE LORD

## THE RESPONSE TO THE PSALM IS

**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 that today you would listen to his voice!*

*‘Harden not your hearts.’*

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.'*

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.'

*O that today you would listen to his voice!  
'Harden not your hearts.'*

## A READING FROM THE LETTER TO THE ROMANS

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.

## THE WORD OF THE LORD

## THE GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia, alleluia.

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

Alleluia.

## A READING FROM THE HOLY GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW

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 ON THE READINGS

Telling someone their faults requires a loving friendship and trust, which does not always happen even in the closest family unit. It is an intelligent, empathetic act which requires the courage to accept the possibility of rejection.

The emphasis in today's gospel is to do the difficult thing of confronting evil in another person, especially if it directed at you, and it may cause more pain to you. Jesus does not give us a way out, we are expected to follow this thoroughly, if 2 or 3 say this in a genuinely helpful way it can reinforce the message. is important and a courageous duty. Gentle guidance can be the greatest help.

Counselling sacrament of Confession was designed to remind us God is aware of our faults and wants us take ownership and be aware of the need to change, termed traditionally the 'firm purpose of Amendment.' Reading Eugene Kennedy's book on Counselling in the

1980s his introduction states clearly that Counselling can be ineffectual if there is no desire to change. It is important to recognise Confession is about your own faults, people occasionally wonder why I am smiling then I point out it is their sins not the faults of their partner, children or mine that we should be talking about.

Confession is difficult as it has the stigma of 'why are you going' and sometimes 'do you want a priest you know to hear you,' although this does not bother anyone in the first communion preparation when I expect a parent to go first before their child's first Confession. They are always honest and a real prayer for help which leaves me feeling quite moved as I hear how parents juggle their love and commitments. In the same way I find it easier to go to confession on a priest's retreat as I can decide what the retreat giver is like, some are excellent, priests tend to understand each other.

It is perhaps the greatest unselfish loving act in our lives when we can speak to someone and convince them to think about and take sufficient ownership of their faults and to begin to do something about it. This is the fulfilment of Gods plan we can live out here on earth. It is also a reassuring joy that someone will do what is the necessary for us.

Final Music: Everybody needs somebody!

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