Love for Lost Sheep

Daily Gospel / Liturgical Cycle A

Fuente: Catholic.net

Matthew 18: 15-20

"If another member of the church sins against you, go and point out the fault when the two of you are alone. If the member listens to you, you have regained that one. But if you are not listened to, take one or two others along with you, so that every word may be confirmed by the evidence of two or three witnesses. If the member refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if the offender refuses to listen even to the church, let such a one be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector. Truly I tell you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven. Again, truly I tell you, if two of you agree on earth about anything you ask, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven. For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them."

Introductory Prayer: Lord Jesus, I come to you once again in prayer. Even though I cannot see you, my faith tells me that you are present. You are ready to listen and desire to speak with me. Your presence gives me hope, because you are the all- powerful God, the creator of heaven and earth. You are the source of all that is good in my life. Nothing happens to me without your knowing and permitting it. My hope leads me to love. I want to be one with you in mind and heart, identifying myself with your will and your standards.

Petition: Lord, help me to grow in my love for the Church and for souls.

1. Go to the One Who Sins Against You: Today's text is part of a larger discussion that includes the preceding parable of the lost sheep. God wants us to love as he loves, even loving those whose sins may have directly harmed us in some way. This is hard. Sometimes we are not particularly forgiving and merciful towards those who sin. We can easily look down on them and imagine that we are much better than they, or we can become impatient that they are not like us. When someone sins against us, we have to look beyond our pain. Indeed, we have to embrace that pain in the redemptive way that Christ shows on the cross and in the Eucharist. We should not write that person off as lost, turn our back, or walk away. We should go to the one who sins against us and seek in love to bring him home to the Father's love.

2. Reconcile Them to the Church: God's love for the fallen sinner not only should be evident in our lives, but also should live in our local churches. Is our parish open and inviting to sinners, or has it become the last refuge for the saved? Does our church go and seek that lost sinner, or do we expect the lost sheep to find its own way to us? God wants us to go to the lost sinner and seek to bring him home to the Church. This means that we need to live as missionaries, as evangelists going out on the street corners and public squares, wherever the lost sinners may be. God loves them and wants to reach them through us. We are his hands and his feet; he wants to speak his words through our lips. How does God want me personally to become involved in this mission of the Church in my local parish?

3. I Am in the Midst of You: As we go out to fulfill Christ's mission toward lost sheep, he goes with us. We are not alone. He promised his disciples that he would be with them to the ends of the earth. This should give us confidence. Jesus is with us, and he is going to help transmit his love for some lost soul through us, through our words and gestures. He will give us the strength to carry on his work. There is also some benefit when we gather together with others in the Church as well. Jesus is present in the Church, where two or three are gathered in his name. We are with him to degree we are united to the Church. As we become committed and involved in our local parish, we are closer to Jesus.

Conversation with Christ: Lord, move me to conquer my fears and complexes, my laziness and indifference, and to become engaged in the Church's mission to save souls. Don't let me blindly walk by the ones you love, the ones you shed your blood to redeem. Don't let my heart harden against them, but help me to go to them with your love and forgiveness.

Resolution: I will find a way to become engaged in the Church's mission of evangelization.