



YEAR A – September 6, 2020

In the first reading, today (Ezekiel 33:7-9), God reminds us that we are responsible for each other, not just for ourselves. He says if we do not speak out (fraternal correction) to dissuade our brothers and sisters who are in denial about their sinful ways, *we will be held responsible for their spiritual death*. Fraternal correction is pointing out the speck in our brother's eye without ignoring the beam in our own.

You can almost hear the modern response to that challenge, "That's not my job. It's the job of someone who is qualified to do that. That's why we have priests and nuns." But Jesus does not agree with that. He doesn't call people who are "qualified", he qualifies people who are called. It's important to remember that the Apostles were not religious leaders or members of the ruling class of their time. They were not "qualified" by human standards. But they were "qualified" by Jesus.

St. Paul reminds us in the second reading (Rom13:8-10) that we must fulfill our call from God the way Jesus fulfilled his and the Apostles fulfilled theirs. That means we must love others the way Jesus loves us - and that includes forgiveness. He warns us, "If we do not forgive, we will not be forgiven." Enough food for thought there for a whole week's retreat.

In the Gospel today (Mt. 18:15-20), Jesus tells us more about the business of "fraternal correction". You don't have to be a psychologist in order to do what Jesus ask us to do. Professional psychological evaluations can be helpful, but they are sometimes misleading. I'm reminded of that clever psychological evaluation of the apostles that was printed several years ago and can now be found on the internet. It's addressed to Jesus and it goes something like this:

"Dear Sir: Thank you for submitting the resumes of the 12 men you have picked for management positions in your new organization. All of them have now taken our battery of tests and we can give you the results. It is the opinion of our staff that most of your nominees are lacking in background, education and vocational aptitude for the type of enterprise you are undertaking.

***Simon Peter** is emotionally unstable and given to fits of temper - not the man you would want to head your organization.*

***Andrew** has absolutely no quality of leadership - he is just a follower.*

*The two brothers, **James and John** are too hot-headed.*

***Thomas** demonstrates a questioning attitude that would undermine company morale.*

***Matthew**, the tax-collector is undoubtedly a man of ability but would project the wrong image for an organization such as yours.*

***James**, son of Alphaeus and **Thaddeus** have radical leanings and are unsuitable.*

*There is one candidate who shows great potential. He is a man of ability and resourcefulness, good with people, has a keen business mind, and has contacts in high places. He is highly motivated, ambitious and responsible. That man is **Judas Iscariot**, We recommend him as your controller and right hand man. We wish you every success in your new venture.*

Sincerely yours - Jordan Management Consultants."

We may feel, at times, that we are not qualified to follow Jesus and do what he asks of us. But remember this: Jesus doesn't call those who are "qualified", he qualifies those he calls. *You* are called! *You are qualified* to do what Jesus asks you to do. Reflect today, "What does He ask you to do? Does it include fraternal correction?"