

**TWENTY-THIRD
SUNDAY
IN ORDINARY TIME
YEAR A**

PRAYER OF THE DAY:

Loving God,
we have come together
to thank you
for your great goodness,
to beg you
to forgive the things
we have done wrong,
to ask your help
to live as we should.
Remind us always
that Jesus is with us,
joining his prayers with ours.
So it is
that we pray this prayer
through Christ, our Lord.

FOCUS OF THE READINGS:

Both of our readings focus on the obligation we have to help one another grow in goodness. Sometimes this requires us to point out the errors of a brother or sister in the church.

Ezekiel warns the prophets of his day that they have a serious responsibility in the community. They are to guide the people and show them right from wrong. The prophet will be held accountable.

Jesus picks up this theme and applies it to everyone in the church. It is not only the leaders who are responsible, but we are all responsible for one another. This Gospel focuses on the power and authority of the community which has rarely been recognized. The source of that power is Christ: "I am there with them."

FIRST READING: *Ezekiel 33:7-9*

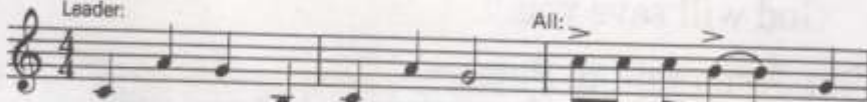

This is a reading from the prophet Ezekiel.

This is what God said to the prophet:

"You must watch over my people.
Whatever I tell you to say to them,
you must say.
When I want you to warn people
who are doing evil things,
you must tell them.
If you don't warn them for me,
I will blame you for what they do.
You will be as bad as they are,
and you, too, will be punished.
But if you do warn them,
and they still go on sinning,
it won't be your fault.
They will be punished, but you will not."

The Word of the Lord.

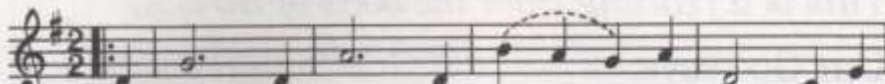
RESPONSE: *Psalm 119*

RESPONSE:
Leader:  All: 

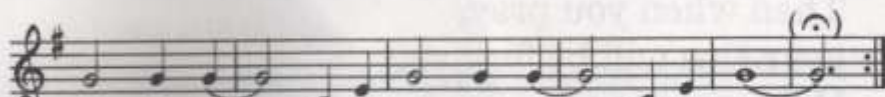
1. God, our hope is in your Word. } O - pen our hearts _ to
2. Your com-mands are al - ways true. }
3. Give us life to do your will. }

lis - ten to you. _ O - pen our hearts _ to lis - ten to you. _

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION:



1. "Where two or three are gathered in my name, I am
2. Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ial "I am



1.2. there with them, — I am there with them, — I am there." —

GOSPEL: *Matthew 18:15-20*

This is a reading from the Gospel of Matthew.

Jesus said to his disciples,

"If your brother or sister
does something wrong,
go and talk to that person alone,
just the two of you.

If the person listens to you
and stops doing wrong,
then you have been helpful.

But if the person won't listen to you,
take two or three other people with you
and try again.

If the person won't listen to them either,
tell it to the Christian community.

And if they won't even listen
to the community,
then that person is the kind
who wants to go on sinning."

Then Jesus said,

"I tell you honestly,
whenever two or three of you
agree to pray about something,
God will do it.

For wherever two or three people
are gathered together in my name,
I am there with them."

The Gospel of the Lord.

REFLECTING ON THE READINGS WITH CHILDREN:

This is not an easy Gospel for children to contemplate. Most children have the experience of being corrected by adults, but few will have had the experience of mutuality in correction. This speaks to adult men and women who can understand their mutual responsibility. We might help the children see in the first part of the Gospel that Jesus teaches us to talk over our differences one to one rather than tattling. But that should not receive the majority of our time. Concentrate instead on the last portion. Help the children to see that Jesus promises to be with us when we pray. What is important here is that we are in community and that we pray in his name.

