

Ordinary 23A – 2026

Rabid Dog

Or would you be more like the woman who was bitten by a rabid dog, and it looked as if she was going to die from rabies. The doctor told her to put her final affairs in order. So the woman took pen and paper, and began writing furiously. In fact, she wrote and wrote and wrote. Finally, the doctor said, *"That sure is a long will you're making."* She snorted, *"Will, nothing! I'm making a list of all the people I'm going to bite!"*

"There are no fish under the ice."

A drunk decides to go ice fishing, so he gathers his gear and goes walking around until he finds a big patch of ice. He heads into the center of the ice and begins to saw a hole. All of sudden, a loud booming voice comes out of the sky. *"You will find no fish under that ice."* The drunk looks around, but sees no one. He starts sawing again. Once more, the voice speaks. *"As I said before, there are no fish under the ice."* The drunk looks all around, high and low, but can't see a single soul. He picks up the saw and tries one more time to finish. Before he can even start cutting, the huge voice interrupts. *"I have warned you three times now. This is not a lake and there are no fish!"* The drunk is now flustered and somewhat scared, so he asks the voice, *"How do you know there are no fish? Are you God trying to warn me?"* "No," the voice replied. *"I am the manager of this ice hockey rink!"* — Today's readings are about correcting our brothers and sisters with loving concern for the temporal and spiritual welfare of the community.

"Let us have harmony!"

More than thirty years ago, a brief story appeared in *Reader's Digest* about a town in Minnesota that got its name in a strange way. When the community was first settled, it had no name. People began to move to the area, and soon the townspeople called a meeting to choose a name for their town. Many suggestions were made, but they couldn't agree on the name. The discussion soon became heated and quarrelsome. One man in attendance that night became so disgusted by the way things were going that he jumped up, pounded on the table with his fist, and shouted, *"Let us have harmony!"* Someone present suddenly seized the idea and shouted back, *"Yes! Let's have harmony!"* And the town got its name: Harmony, Minnesota. — Harmony is a wonderful thing to have in a community, a family or a church. If harmony is going to take place, someone has to heed Jesus' advice for reconciliation as given in today's Gospel.

Marshall Tito and Bishop Sheen:

In a little church in a small village, an altar boy serving the priest at Sunday Mass accidentally dropped the cruet of wine. The village priest struck the altar boy sharply on the cheek and in a gruff voice shouted, "*Leave the altar and don't come back.*" That boy became Marshall Tito, the Communist leader. In the cathedral of a large city in another place, another altar boy serving the bishop at Sunday Mass also accidentally dropped the cruet of wine. With a warm twinkle in his eyes, the bishop gently whispered, "*Someday you will be a priest.*" Do you know who that boy was? Venerable Archbishop Fulton Sheen. — How do you deal with others who have caused problems for you? Jesus has the answer in today's Gospel: with straight talk, due process, but most of all, with grace.

"Dad, I just came over to tell you that I love you."

In one of the popular Chicken Soup volumes, Dennis E. Mannering tells about an assignment he once gave to a class he teaches for adults. He told them, "Go to someone you love, and tell them that you love them." At the beginning of the next class, one of the students began by saying, "I was angry with you last week when you gave us this assignment. I didn't feel I had anyone to say those words to. But as I began driving home my conscience started talking. Then I knew exactly who I needed to say 'I love you' to. Five years ago, my father and I had a vicious disagreement and never really resolved it. We avoided seeing each other unless we absolutely had to at family gatherings. We hardly spoke. So, by the time I got home, I had convinced myself I was going to tell my father I loved him. Just making that decision seemed to lift a heavy load off my chest. At 5:30, I was at my parents' house ringing the doorbell, praying that Dad would answer the door. I was afraid if Mom answered, I would chicken out and tell her instead. But as luck would have it, Dad did answer the door. I didn't waste any time. I took one step in the door and said, 'Dad, I just came over to tell you that I love you.' It was as if a transformation came over my dad. Before my eyes his face softened, the wrinkles seemed to disappear and he began to cry. He reached out. But that's not even my point. Two days after that visit, my dad had a heart attack. So my message to all of you is this: Don't wait to do the things you know need to be done. What if I had waited to tell my dad? Take the time to do what you need to do and do it now!" ("Do It Now!" Condensed Chicken Soup for Souls, Copyright 1996 by Jack Canfield, Mark Victor Hansen & Patty Hansen.). — That's the advice that Jesus would give us. People hurt us, sometimes intentionally, sometimes without meaning to. But sometimes who is in the right and who is in the wrong is not as important as finding a common ground where the relationship can be maintained. Sometimes that means that we have to take the first step, even though we know that the other person is in the wrong. And the best time to take that step is today!

Correct with your life!

A man approached St. Francis of Assisi and asked him, "*Brother Francis, I am in a quandary. In the Bible, it says we should rebuke sinners, but I see people sinning all the time. I don't feel like I should go around rebuking everybody.*" St. Francis then said, "*What you must do is to live in such a way that your life rebukes the sinner- How you act will call others to repentance.*" (Johnson V. in *The Sunday Liturgy*)