

September 6, 2026 Homily
Twenty-third Sunday in Ordinary

Time <https://bible.usccb.org/bible/readings/090626.cfm>

Conflicts are part of human relationships, and the Church is not an exception. Life in the Church will involve offense, disappointment, and even sin. Jesus does not simply call us to resolve the conflicts that emerge between us. He actually invites us to cultivate a culture of RECONCILIATION. How? The Gospel tells us that we will have conflicts in our personal and communal relationships. And the instruction is clear: If we have a conflict with another person, we are called to go to the one who has caused harm and tell him his fault when we are alone together. It means that we are to bring into light the fault, to name the wrong, not as an act of condemnation, but as an act of love. The goal is not revenge, but to seek restoration of hearing, understanding, and fellowship. It is interesting to notice that Jesus puts the burden not on the offender, but on the offended. The offended is challenged to go, to speak, and seek reconciliation. Jesus offers not punishment, but a merciful and redemptive process. Christ is not only present in the peace that may come after reconciliation: He is truly present in the pain of the process. If the wrong doer refuses, Jesus tells us that we should use two or three witnesses, not to humiliate or expose or to shame the other person, but to deepen the opportunity for truth-telling and repair. If the situation is not resolved, the issue can be brought to the Church, because when a relationship between two individuals is about to break, it endangers the whole body.

The following instruction of Jesus in this text of the Gospel is very challenging but deeply merciful and meaningful for us: He asks us to treat the unrepentant person as we would treat a Gentile or a tax collector. This commandment must be interpreted in light of how Jesus himself treats such people. Jesus didn't exclude Gentiles and tax collectors. Rather, He eats with them, welcomes them, loves them and saves them. The teaching is clear for us: The Church isn't a place without conflict. It's the place where we learn to confront, confess, and reconcile over and over again. Then, Jesus gives the Church spiritual authority: "Whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven." The Church then becomes the place where judgement and mercy are anticipated and enacted on earth. And Jesus concludes his teaching about reconciliation with this promise: "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." This promise of presence is not about worship gatherings. Jesus promises to show up in the

messiness of confrontation, honesty, forgiveness, and the slow and often painful journey toward reconciliation. And we are assured of something else: When we have conflicts in our relationships, Jesus not only walks with the victim but seeks the redemption of the offender as well. Where sin abounds, grace abounds all the more.

In summary, Jesus introduces the Church as a community where truth is spoken, wrongs are named, and sinners are always forgiven, loved and saved. So maybe this is what Jesus means by church: Not a comfortable club, but a community of the forgiven, learning how to forgive. Not perfect people, but a people who keep showing up, keep telling the truth, and keep inviting one another into healing. Jesus really teaches us how we can follow God's ways toward conflicts: He seeks reconciliation by all means. We are the forgiven of God, called to forgive and love one another, as God has forgiven us and loved us. Human history teaches us how wrong violence, hate and vengeance are. Jesus promises that if we implement a culture of reconciliation among us and among the nations of the world, we will see the new heavens and the new earth that God wants us to establish now, in our world.

Every effort for reconciliation saves lives and can bring a true and lasting peace.

The Universal Prayer
Sunday, September 6, 2026
Twenty-Third Sunday in Ordinary Time

Celebrant:

Sisters and brothers,
gathered in the name of Jesus we know that he is with us, and so we can be confident in our prayer.

1. May this 'Season of Creation', which runs through September, unite us in the prayer intention of Pope Leo this month: "For a just and sustainable management of water, a vital resource, so that everyone may have equal access to it."

We pray to the Lord

2. May we respond to the teaching of Jesus and seek reconciliation when arguments, disagreements and conflict of interest divide our families, work and education places, Church and neighborhoods.

We pray to the Lord.

3. May the people on the border of Nepal and Tibet, distraught by the glacial ice, rock and mud flood, be sustained in their need and receive the international support so urgently needed.

We pray to the Lord.

4. May the violence consuming Haiti through gang violence, the attacks upon Christian and Muslim Palestinians in the Occupied West Bank, the poverty inflicted upon the people of Gaza, and the relentless war between Ukraine and Russia, Israel and Iran, come to an end so that peace becomes possible.

We pray to the Lord.

5. May the religious order of the Daughters of St. Mary of Guadalupe and the Diocese of Raleigh, Be blessed with a great increase in the number of vocations to religious life and to the priesthood.

We pray to the Lord.

6. May those with whom we had differences in this life, and who have died, along with all who died in the Nepal-Tibet tragedy go with our prayers and enter the heavenly Father's eternal home.

We pray to the Lord.

Celebrant:

Almighty God, who sent your Son among us as the source of reconciliation, Give us the grace to be at peace in our families and communities, in our nation and across the globe.

Through Christ our Lord.