

A DUTY TO WARN EACH OTHER OF OUR SINS

In today's Gospel (Matt 18:15-20), Jesus reminds us that to belong to the Church, is to belong to a family of spiritual brothers and sisters. We are all Members of the One Body of Christ and have a responsibility to care for each other. This means that being a Christian is not a private affair, but a family or community affair. That is why a Christian is called to be a spiritual *sentry*, to watch-out and warn our neighbour, when they fall to sin, because the devil is robbing them of the opportunity to go to Heaven someday (Ez 33:7-9). If we keep silent, then God will hold us personally responsible for their sins. We have an obligatory duty to warn each other face to face. If the 'lost sheep' refuses to listen, then Jesus says to bring others along to talk sense into them. If all fails, we have a duty to place that lost soul into the Chalice of Healing in all our Masses in the community, praying for their conversion.

SILENCE CAN BE A SIN OF OMISSION

To keep silent in case we offend our sinful neighbour is a mortal sin of Omission. To remain silent, and at the same time, not be bothered that our silence offends God, will have devastating consequences for us on Judgement Day. When giving spiritual direction to somebody, we do so, out of Love and not out of an attitude that '*I am right and you are wrong*'. For example, if we hear somebody taking the Holy Name of Jesus Christ in vain, or know of unmarried couples cohabiting in sin, whether heterosexual or same sex, then we are commanded by God to warn them of their sinful lifestyles. Nobody is out to embarrass anybody. It is about making others aware of Jesus' teachings and working towards reconciliation with God, to avoid Hell.

TRUE LOVE OFFENDS NOBODY

St. Paul (Rom 13:8-10), emphasises our Christian obligation to love one another in a platonic way. When we sin, we create an outstanding debt to God that, if pursued relentlessly, can lead us into spiritual bankruptcy. We must repent for our sins in confession, before we depart this earth. God's Divine Mercy will wipe clean that debt when we go to Him with a contrite heart. Jesus' invitation for us to live in Heaven, comes with conditions. It depends on our sinful hearts changing now and aligning ourselves to live by the Rules of His Sacred Heart. Jesus is not promoting hateful discrimination against each other, but is depending on us to direct His Light into darkened and impure hearts. We are all sinners and must never judge, but always reach-out to each other in the Spirit of Charity. Jesus tells us that He is present when we gather in or out of Church. This comes with a responsibility to speak the hard Truth when necessary. God bless, Fr. Brendan.