

Dealing with Conflict Nineteenth Week in Ordinary Time Wednesday, August 13, 2014
8:15 AM Ez 9:1-7, 10:18-22; **Mt 18:15-20** (Sts. Pontian, pope, and Hippolytus, priest,
martyrs) (In Baptism we become one with each other in Christ. Then we had to treat each
other in an appropriate way.)

“For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.”

We see here the motivation for a new life in Christ, and a particular ethic is the **presence of Christ in every group of two or three who gather in his name**. This is what you could call **the essence of the Church**: the presence of Christ in those who gather in his name. So if there is any more basic reason to gather together, it is to make Christ present. So **the presence of Christ** is not something purely spiritual or purely mystical; it is, but it goes beyond that and **affects the relationships among those who gather in Christ’s name**.

This is the focus of this particular gospel, the relationships. We do not relate to one another out of some sort of isolation, but **the relationships themselves are part of Christ’s presence**. This is already the beginning of the idea of **the mystical body, that in Baptism we become one with each other in Christ**. Then we have to treat each other in an **appropriate way**.

So **if you have something against somebody, and you will—sooner or later you will have something against somebody—you have to go and tell that person what it is**. This is something, however, people are very reluctant to do. Why are they so reluctant? Because there’s something missing. There’s something in our spirituality that isn’t quite in place yet. **If we allowed ourselves to be filled with the word of God, we would be motivated, we would have a right idea of ourselves, and we would be able to present our objections, so to speak, to somebody else: politely, kindly, strongly.**

But people don't want to do this. What do they do? **They complain about so-and-so to someone else.** Well, that isn't what builds up the body of Christ; that tears it down. That is a complete rejection of the whole idea of the body of Christ. We have to see that **we really undermine Jesus' whole mission when we don't follow his directions.**

So **next time you have something against someone, find a time and a place and a way to say so.** And if you don't believe it's important enough to warrant the risk involved in challenging someone, then forget about it. Put it out of your mind, your heart, or your soul because it can't be that important. **If it is so important, then take it to your brother or sister. In this way you will be building up the body of Christ.**

Now how is your brother or sister going to react to this? Well, we don't know. That's why he said **if he listens to you, you have won him over. If he does not, then take someone else with you.** This would be pretty serious at this point. Take somebody with you. Why? Well, we can get overly subjective, overly emotional. Take somebody else with you **for balance.** Try to use reason and Spirit to address this issue. **Then if that doesn't work, take it to the Church. That means to the community,** and treat this person like a tax collector or gentile, which means avoid them. Don't attack them. Don't hurt them. Just avoid them. **That's Jesus' instruction. This is how to live in his name.**