

23rd Sunday in Ordinary Time

People Keeping

Today's readings paint a picture of believers relating to one another and to their God. In 585 BC, Ezekiel enters a new phase. He moves from being a scolder to being a sentry. Besides recognizing retribution, he now has the role of sentry. He was to inform the people of God's wishes. To not do so was to endanger the common good. He was his sister and brothers keeper.

In the second reading, Paul considers the obligation of charity. He focuses on duties not rights. For Paul, love is the fulfillment of the Mosaic Law. He draws all commandments under the one of "Love thy Neighbor." By loving our neighbor, we are paying our debt of love. We are our neighbor's keeper.

In the Gospel, Matthew negates the idea of individuals as isolated beings. He demonstrates the course of Christian action toward sinful members of the community. Through escalating the actions, further pressure is brought to bear upon the sinful member. If all actions failed, then the sinner was excommunicated. And God ratified this action of the community (whatever you bind on earth . . .). the Gospel closes with the command for community action to pray. The community is our brothers and sisters keeper.