This Sunday's <u>Counsel</u>

THEME:

We are renewed in mind and heart when we lovingly reconcile with one another.

PROMISE:

"If two of you agree on earth about anything...it shall be granted...by my heavenly Father." (Mt 18: 19)

WORD:

Ez 33: 7-9/ Ps 95: 1-2, 6-7, 8-9/ Rom 13: 8-10/ Mt 18: 15-20

ORDER:

• You shall love your neighbor as yourself. (Rom 13: 19b)

DIRECTIONS:

- Remain reconciled and in solidarity with our families, parishes and BLD community.
- Take to heart the good we can do together as there is power in unity.

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Fraternal Correction With Love

REFLECTION:

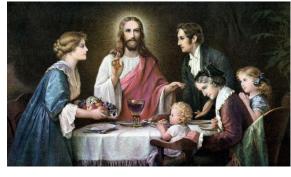
This Sunday, the 23rd Sunday in ordinary time, the Word of God provides the way to dealing with conflicts and differences. It exhorts us to heal division, restore unity, and build a community of mutual understanding,

care, and solidarity.

It does not take away the hard work of telling the truth and correcting; it teaches us that Christian discipleship is to follow the example of the One who heals, restores, and accompanies others on the road of wholesome transformation.

As Christ's disciples, we must embrace that transformation. "We are renewed in mind and heart when we lovingly reconcile with one another". St. Paul's encouragement in the 2nd Reading gives us the Order, reminding us of the obligation to love one another which eventually should transform us as protectors of each other's soul. "You shall love your neighbor as yourself" – a responsibility that is geared toward the love of the other since the true and intrinsic character of Christians is love. From God's love emanates peace, humility, and unity.

<u>PEACE.</u> Peace as defined is a period in which there is no disturbance. However, it is dangerous to identify peace as the absence of



disturbance or conflict because a forced or negotiated peace may end the external conflict, but the inner turmoil remains.

This Sunday's Gospel from Matthew is called the *"church order"* discourse where Jesus speaks more directly about matters of Church

discipline and order. In the Gospel reading, Jesus addresses a common occurrence in the Christian community: a dispute between two members of the Church. Jesus outlines a procedure for settling such matters fairly.

This is indeed a strict teaching about community living and fraternal correction. Jesus insists on the virtue of reconciliation as a necessary path to healing that requires rigorous process, the most respectful approach to fraternal correction.

Jesus does not discourage disagreement within the community of the Church; he acknowledges the reality of conflict and error and offers his disciples a means for addressing such matters.

Our own Community is no stranger to conflicts. In our 22 years of existence, we've gone through a number of disagreements or differences of opinions or storms, if you will. But here we are, we continue to stand in God's presence. These conflicts test our faith but at

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the same time make us grow. It's only when we are tested that we can be proven and made stronger.

Our BLD Community or the bigger Church is not an assembly of perfect people, but of imperfect persons seeking perfection in which each one must adopt the character of prudence in dealing with each other's weaknesses.

The Gospel gives the message of hope and peace, that is, Jesus is present with the community and will guide the community in its relations. If decisions are taken in prayer, then the community can be assured of God's love, His assistance, and His presence in each and every one of us.

<u>HUMILITY</u>. Both the giver and the receiver, individually or as a Community, benefit from the practice of fraternal correction. This act of Christian charity does not only bear fruits of peace and mercy but also requires the practice of the virtue of humility.

Individually, humility strengthens our desire to be closer to God and become true disciples in his eyes. When we are humble, the Lord can draw close to us because we are not full of ourselves. If we have been emptied of ourselves, the Lord can pour His own life into us. Humility is the key to the Lord's own heart; it is the being and foundation of all holiness and every virtue.

In the Community, humility strengthens our unity at every level, thus giving greater effectiveness to our evangelizing mission; it guarantees faithfulness to the spirit of Jesus Christ; and it enables us to experience the security of knowing that we can count on the help of our brothers and sisters in the faith.

One of the pledges of being a Committed and Covenanted disciple is that we should "Remain reconciled and in solidarity with other members of BLD Community". Each one of us has a responsibility to heed St. Paul's exhortation in the 2nd reading, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself". Paul's message is nothing new to us, we have heard Christ say the same thing in his gospels, so we need to look at today's gospel reading with love and humility to address difficult circumstances that confront our Community.

<u>UNITY</u>. Jesus promised that "*If* two of you agree on earth about anythingit shall be granted ... by my heavenly Father." (Mt 18: 19)

There is power in unity if we take to heart the good we can all do together. The gospel calls us to unity and reconciliation through sincere forgiveness of one another. We can see that all the readings are connected, inviting us to care for each other.

In our Community, we act together so that we may help one another in God's Name, thereby multiplying our resources and ability to do what God calls us to do. Through our links to one another in Christ, a capacity rises in our community, enabling us to draw on God's power to make healing and life-giving love more effective among us. We come together, we stay together, we work together -- in our Lord's Name, bringing to focus the Presence of God and unleashing the power of the Spirit --to transform our lives. When we gather in Jesus' name and invoke his presence, the action opens our hearts to allow Him to be a part of us and of what we do.

Humility brings unity. With unity there will be true peace. From peace springs forth love. And with love, God is with us.

Lord, let us be the generation of reconciliation and peace. Give us humble hearts that would lead us to heal division, restore unity, and build a community of mutual understanding, care, and solidarity. Let us serve you, Lord, in unity so others will believe that You are the only one true foundation of this holy race and nation. *AMEN*.

I will bow down in worship before you, O Lord my God, the rock of my salvation.

Christian Life

Why should anyone spend his or her life for the Gospel? That is a question I would ask you... The Christian life moves forward by asking questions, like children who are always asking new things, because at their age they do not understand everything. The Christian life draws us close to the Lord and always asks questions, in order that we will better understand the Lord, better understand his teaching.

