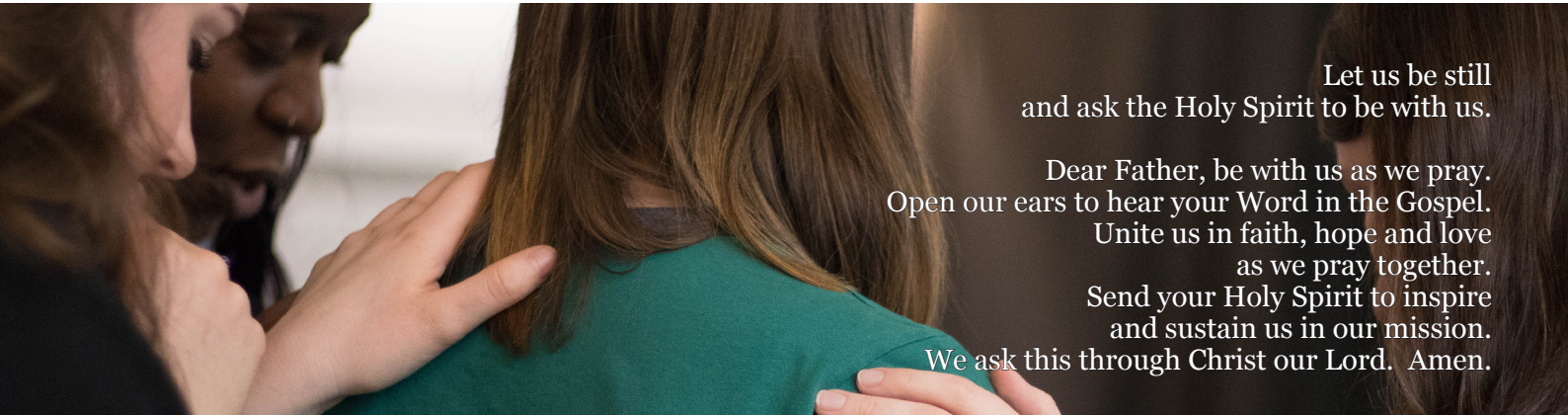


Formed in Prayer



Let us be still
and ask the Holy Spirit to be with us.

Dear Father, be with us as we pray.
Open our ears to hear your Word in the Gospel.
Unite us in faith, hope and love
as we pray together.
Send your Holy Spirit to inspire
and sustain us in our mission.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Gospel

Mt 18:15-20

Jesus said to his disciples: 'If your brother or sister does something wrong, go and have it out with him alone, between your two selves. If he listens to you, you have won back your brother. If he does not listen, take one or two others with you: the evidence of two or three witnesses is required to sustain any charge. But if he refuses to listen to these, report it to the community; and if he refuses to listen to the community, treat him like a pagan or a tax collector.

'I tell you solemnly, whatever you bind on earth shall be considered bound in heaven; whatever you loose on earth shall be considered loosed in heaven.

'I tell you solemnly once again, if two of you on earth agree to ask anything at all, it will be granted to you by my Father in heaven. For where two or three meet in my name, I shall be there with them.'

*What words or phrases struck you in Sunday's Gospel reading?
What might God be prompting you to consider or inviting you to do in and through the Gospel?*

Reflection

While two distinct matters are dealt with in the Sunday Gospel reading, there is a clear link in terms of what Jesus is highlighting. The first is about how we should go about resolving quarrels with our brothers and sisters in the Church. We may have heard this reading several times before, but do we only apply Jesus' exhortation when it is easy to do so, and dismiss it as outdated when it seems too confronting to resolve conflict in this way?

In the second part, Jesus underlines the importance of gathering with others when we pray – in other words, the power of community. The theme tying these two parts together is the emphasis on unity – that is, the people of God living and working together in harmony. We have a special responsibility as leaders to work to unify those we lead, and work towards building bridges and being peacemakers. For where unity is strongest, there the Holy Spirit can work most powerfully.

(Lidia Galea, CSYMI Curriculum and Youth Ministers Network Coordinator)

Prayer

Lord Jesus,
May we heed your words today
and truly work to bring peace in the Church and the world.
Open our hearts to be forgiving of others
and to set aside our own wants to work together for unity.
Amen.