

GOSPEL PEARLS

The importance of belonging to the Church

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Jesus said to his disciples: "If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother. But if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, that every charge may be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses. If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church. And if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector. Truly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be lost in heaven. Again I say to you, if two of you agree on earth about anything they ask, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven. For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them." (Matthew 18: 15-20)

Jesus highlights the role of His disciples. In particular, he underscores the role of the apostles and their successors as the bishops of His Church. Jesus is, indeed, present when "two or three are gathered" in His Name, as we read in today's Gospel. Therefore, we must remind those we meet everyday of the importance of belonging to the Church. Warnings about losing our souls, however unwelcome it may be to the world, must always be done, yet, obviously, with love and not so as to feel better than others.