

**SEPTEMBER 4, 2011**

**TWENTY-THIRD SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME**

**MATTHEW 18:15-20**

"God don't make no junk"—so goes a popular saying. What does this tell me about myself? Born of God, I am a creature, one of dignity and worth, one fashioned to God's own image and likeness. I am graced with intelligence and understanding, with feelings and free will, with the gift of self-determination. By no means am I "junk."

Likewise, my sisters and brothers—creatures, too—share similar dignity and deserve my respect. But at times, I forget who I am and who my neighbor is. Occasionally I act like "junk." I hurt or harm another. I bend the truth just enough. I lash out at an undeserving victim. I make fun of another's weakness. I castigate an associate publicly. Oh, yes, I can be abusive and malicious.

Just as I can resort to un-God-like behavior, so too, can my sisters and brothers. What do I do as soon as I discover another has acted wrongly, possibly toward me or another?

Jesus teaches us the way when He talks to His disciples about admonishing another (Matthew 18:15-18). Confronting another who has hurt or offended me is painful. But if I see myself and others as reflections of God, I am called by the gospel to help another recognize that his/her behavior is hurtful or destructive. Risk is involved. If I let someone know that her actions have hurt me or are destructive to the community, will my sister, who knows my faults too, even listen to me? Will she snub me from now on, likely multiplying malicious acts towards me or giving me the "cold shoulder?"

Jesus says, "I came not to condemn but to save," and "If anyone commits a wrong, go and point out [her] fault, but keep it between the two of you. If [she] listens to you, *you* have won [her] over." Admonishing another can be a means of saying "I care about *you*. I want *you* to be the best person you can be." And who can find fault with that?

**--Sr. Margaret Riche, CDP**

***For reflection or sharing:***

- ▲ How do I accept well-intended correction?
- ▲ Community living calls for both honesty and charity. What should be my attitude
- ▲ whenever I correct or confront another-how can I make it a beneficial experience in self-growth?