

## Chaplain's Bulletin September 10, 2023



Dear Folks,

Our Gospel today (Matt 18:15-20) deals with reconciling conflict in the Church. This is such a critical topic I've refurbished an old article on the subject. One of the major ways that Satan undermines the work of the Gospel is sowing division and conflict in the Church. Resolving conflict is a mighty way to combat Satan and his work.

If I could recommend one book for people, I would emphasize "Redeeming Conflict" by Ann Garrido. I have mentioned it before, but it is time to mention it again. It is about twelve habits that can transform conflict and make it a spiritual journey.

The twelve habits are:

1. Sidestep the triangle (go directly to the person with which you have the problem).
2. Be curious (What is happening with the other person? What is that person thinking? What is that person seeking? What might this person see that I don't? Is there more to the situation than either of us sees?) That is related to #3.
3. Listen to understand (We usually listen to refute their point of view, but remember their beliefs make sense to them, so how do they fit together in their mind?).
4. Undo the knot of intention (we tend to judge ourselves on our intentions and others on their results, but good intentions don't guarantee good consequences, and we need to keep that in mind for both parties).
5. Welcome emotion (our emotions give us clues to what is really happening inside us, and what this situation means to us).
6. Speak your voice (while we emphasize hearing and understanding the other, the situation cannot truly be resolved without your side of the story being articulated).
7. Know and steady thyself (some issues trip our triggers, and we can go off and say things we will regret. It is good to know and compensate for such tendencies).
8. Pray to forgive (Forgiveness is essential to dealing with conflict, and the ability to do so is a gift from God, so we need to pray for it).

9. Repent (very often, both sides have contributed to the problem, at least somewhat, and we need to own our part).
10. Problem solve (It really helps to develop creative solutions where both sides win).
11. Be trustworthy, not necessarily trusting (not everyone is trustworthy, but we need to be, and Christians are called to do right no matter how much others do wrong).
12. Practice prudence (knowing which of these habits to exercise and when is more art than science).

It is a very Catholic book, but I don't think there is anything there to offend our non-Catholic brothers and sisters.

Jesus said, "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God (Matthew 5:9). Jesus took a whole beatitude to emphasize this point (I have a lot to say about how important the beatitudes are in the teaching of Jesus). If we want to follow Jesus' teaching (we do, don't we?) and we want to be called "children of God" (we do, don't we), would we not be intentional about increasing our ability to be peacemakers?

Blessings,

Fr. Jim