



ST IGNATIUS CHURCH · TOKYO

“Am I My Brother’s Keeper?”

Christian Responsibility, Fraternal Correction, and Love

Catholic Faith Formation Seminar

Sunday, 6 September 2026 · 2:00–4:00 p.m.
Kibe Hall · Twenty-third Sunday in Ordinary Time

*“If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone.
If he listens to you, you have won over your brother.” — Matthew 18:15*





Love that includes another's good

To help participants understand that Christian love includes concern for another person's spiritual, moral, emotional, and material well-being — while ensuring that correction is offered with humility, discretion, gentleness, and respect for legitimate authority.

Pope Benedict XVI · Message for Lent 2012

Christians are often “very sensitive to the idea of charity and caring about the physical and material well-being of others, but almost completely silent about our spiritual responsibility towards our brothers and sisters.” Fraternal correction “is always moved by love and mercy, and springs from genuine concern for the good of the other.”

Cf. Proverbs 9:8–9; Matthew 18:15; Galatians 6:1; spiritual work of mercy: “admonish the sinner.” CIC cann. 210, 212 §3, 220, 1341.

► **Watch:** [Rome Reports — Benedict XVI on fraternal correction \(1 min\)](#)





PROGRAMME · 2:00–4:00 P.M.

How we will spend these two hours

2:00–2:10

Opening and introduction

Genesis 4:1–16 · Cain's question

2:10–2:25

The Christian meaning of responsibility

Love of God and neighbour

2:25–2:45

Scripture and Canon Law

Ezekiel 33; Matthew 18; Gal 6; Jas 5; CIC 212, 220, 1341

2:45–3:00

Small-group activity

Correction or criticism?

3:00–3:20

How to correct with love

Pray · Verify · Speak · Listen · Help

3:20–3:35

Love, forgiveness, and reconciliation

Truth without cruelty; mercy without indifference

3:35–3:50

Saints as examples of responsibility

Monica, Augustine, and companions of late summer

3:50–4:00

Personal commitment and closing prayer

Our Father





Cain's question is not an excuse

Then the Lord said to Cain, "Where is Abel your brother?" He said, "I do not know; am I my brother's keeper?" And the Lord said, "What have you done? The voice of your brother's blood is crying to me from the ground."

Genesis 4:9–10

Cain's use of the question

He hides murder behind a slogan. The question is meant to refuse responsibility.

The Christian answer

Yes. Discipleship recognises that we are responsible for one another in love (Romans 13:8–10).

Christ's reversal

Jesus, our true Brother, keeps us even unto the Cross. We bear one another's burdens (Galatians 6:2).





OPENING PRAYER INTENTIONS

Before we speak, we ask

“If today you hear his voice, harden not your hearts.” — Psalm 95:7–8

01

For families and parish communities

That homes and this parish may become places of truthful, patient love.

02

For people suffering isolation or injustice

That no one among us is treated as irrelevant or disposable.

03

For courage to correct wrongdoing charitably

That we may speak when silence would be complicity (Ezekiel 33:7–9).

04

For humility to accept correction

That we first notice the beam in our own eye (Matthew 7:3–5).





Every person is never disposable

Every person is created by God in His image (Genesis 1:27). Love of neighbour includes more than feeling well-disposed. CIC can. 210; can. 222.

Practical assistance

Matthew 25:35–40

Protection of the vulnerable

Psalms 82:3–4

Spiritual welfare

James 5:19–20

Truthful speech

Ephesians 4:15

Forgiveness and reconciliation

Matthew 18:21–22

Prayer and accompaniment

1 Timothy 2:1





Who are the brothers and sisters entrusted to my care?

“You shall love your neighbour as yourself.” Love does no evil to the neighbour; hence love is the fulfilment of the law.

Romans 13:9–10 · cf. Mark 12:29–31 · CIC can. 208 (equal dignity of the faithful)

Family members

Parishioners

Colleagues

Migrants

Children

The elderly

The lonely

Those with whom I
disagree





Four texts to read together

Ezekiel 33:7–9

The watchman

If you do not warn the wicked, their blood I will require at your hand.
If you warn them, you will have saved your life.

Matthew 18:15–20

The process

Go privately. Then take one or two. Then tell the Church. Purpose:
“you have won over your brother.”

Galatians 6:1–2

The spirit

Restore the one caught in a transgression in a spirit of gentleness.
Bear one another’s burdens.

James 5:19–20

The fruit

Whoever brings back a sinner from the error of his way will save his
soul from death and cover a multitude of sins.

► **Watch:** [Dr Brant Pitre — Matthew 18 and reconciliation](#)

► **Watch:** [Fr Jacinto — Mercy requires correction](#)





MATTHEW 18:15–20

A gradual process aimed at restoration

1

Speak privately

“Go and tell him his fault between you and him alone.” Protect the person’s name (CIC can. 220).

2

Take one or two

“That every fact may be established on the testimony of two or three witnesses.”

3

Tell the Church

Seek pastoral help when unresolved. Authority serves communion (can. 212; can. 529).

4

Seek restoration

Even distance, if needed, is ordered to conversion — not humiliation. “You have won over your brother.”





Correction is charity before it is a penalty

The 1983 Code, Book VI revised by *Pascite gregem Dei* (in force 8 Dec 2021), places fraternal correction before judicial or administrative penalties.

can. 210

All the faithful must strive for holiness and help the Church's sanctification.

can. 212 §3

The faithful have the right — and at times the duty — to make known their views to pastors and other faithful, with reverence and regard for the common good.

can. 220

No one may unlawfully harm another's good reputation or violate the right to privacy. Correction must not become slander.

can. 223

In exercising rights, the faithful must consider the common good and the rights of others.

can. 529 §1

The pastor is to know his people, visit families, and correct failings prudently — especially those far from practice.

can. 1752

The salvation of souls is always the supreme law of the Church.





Fraternal correction is not a trial

1. Fraternal correction

An act of charity among the faithful (Mt 18:15; Gal 6:1). Aim: win the brother. Governed by truth, gentleness, and can. 220 (reputation).

2. Official warning or rebuke

can. 1339: an Ordinary may warn a person in danger of an offence, or rebuke one whose conduct causes scandal. Documented pastoral authority — not yet a penalty.

3. Penal process

can. 1341 (2021): the Ordinary initiates a judicial or administrative process to impose or declare penalties only when fraternal correction, rebuke, and other pastoral care cannot restore justice, reform the offender, and repair scandal.





Correction or criticism?

Ask: Is correction appropriate? Who should speak? Private or public? What words express concern without condemnation? Is professional, pastoral, or civil authority required? (CIC can. 220; safeguarding is never “private only.”)

- 1 A friend has stopped attending Mass and appears spiritually discouraged.
- 2 Someone repeatedly spreads damaging gossip in a parish group.
- 3 A family member is making a serious moral decision that harms others.
- 4 A parish volunteer is treated unfairly by another member.
- 5 A person appears to be experiencing abuse or serious danger.





Not everything is “private correction”

Abuse, exploitation, threats, and danger must not be handled merely as private fraternal correction. They should be reported through appropriate safeguarding, pastoral, or civil channels.

Fraternal correction protects a brother’s good name when the matter is a personal fault (can. 220). Safeguarding protects the vulnerable when harm is occurring or likely. Charity never asks us to keep a dangerous secret.

“Rescue the weak and the needy; deliver them from the hand of the wicked.” — Psalm 82:4

If you are unsure: speak first with a priest, a safeguarding officer, or the appropriate civil authority. Do not investigate alone.





A practical model

1 Pray

Examine motives. Charity, or anger, pride, fear, control? “Search me, O God” (Psalm 139:23–24).

2 Verify

Do not rely on rumours. “Every fact... two or three witnesses” (Matthew 18:16).

3 Choose setting

Ordinarily private. St John Chrysostom: not public, insulting, or humiliating.

4 Speak concretely

Address the action, not the person’s worth. Invite their understanding.

5 Listen

Correction is not a speech from above. The other may reveal unknown suffering.

6 Offer help

The aim is return to what is good — accompaniment, not a verdict (Galatians 6:1–2).

► **Watch:** [Fr Gregory Pine, OP — Why you should correct your brother](#)





Speak so as to win the brother

Use language such as

- ▶ “I am concerned about what happened.”
- ▶ “May I share something because I care about you?”
- ▶ “How do you understand the situation?”
- ▶ “Is there a way we can repair the harm?”

Avoid

- ▶ Public embarrassment
- ▶ Name-calling and sarcasm
- ▶ Gossip dressed as “concern”
- ▶ Threats and ultimatata
- ▶ Condemning the person rather than the action





Neither condemnation nor indifference

Correction without love becomes condemnation.
Love without truth becomes indifference.

Forgiveness

is not pretending that nothing happened. It releases vengeance to God (Romans 12:19–21).

Reconciliation

is not the immediate restoration of trust. Trust is rebuilt by truth and amended life.

Mercy

walks with accountability. The Church binds and looses for the good of souls (Matthew 18:18).

Confession

is where Christ himself restores. “If we confess our sins...” (1 John 1:9).





Late summer companions on the calendar

St Monica • 27 Aug

Persevering prayer and patient love for a wandering son.

St Augustine • 28 Aug

A restless heart converted into truth and service of the Church.

St Teresa of Calcutta • 5 Sep

Christ recognised in those who are poor and discarded.

St Peter Claver • 9 Sep

Courageous service to the enslaved and oppressed.

St Vincent de Paul • 27 Sep

Organised charity: love that becomes a lasting work.

Korean Martyrs • 20 Sep

Responsibility for the faith under persecution in Asia.

St Matthew • 21 Sep

A called sinner who becomes a witness and evangelist.

The Archangels • 29 Sep

Michael defends, Gabriel announces, Raphael heals.

► Watch: [EWTN — St Monica's prayers](#)

► Watch: [Bishop Barron — Mother Teresa](#)

► Watch: [Korean Martyrs](#)





THE CLEAREST IMAGE

The neighbour who does not walk past

“Which of these three, do you think, proved neighbour to the man who fell among the robbers?” He said, “The one who showed him mercy.” And Jesus said to him, “Go and do likewise.”

Luke 10:36–37

Sees

Does not avert the gaze.

Approaches

Crosses the road toward the wound.

Binds

Offers concrete help, not a slogan.

Entrusts

Pays the cost and remains responsible.

► **Watch:** [Pope Leo XIV — Don't just walk by. Be the Good Samaritan](#)





This week, I will be my brother's or sister's keeper by...

● Contacting an isolated person

● Ending or correcting gossip

● Asking forgiveness

● Speaking privately and charitably about a serious concern

● Seeking help for someone at risk

● Praying for a difficult person

● Going to Confession

● Volunteering in parish or community service





After the Our Father

Lord Jesus, teach us to love one another in truth and mercy. Give us courage to defend the vulnerable, humility to accept correction, wisdom to speak at the right time, and patience to seek reconciliation. Make our parish a community where people are protected, forgiven, restored, and helped to grow in holiness. Amen.





Direct YouTube links for preparation or a short clip

Benedict XVI, Lent 2012	Rome Reports — fraternal correction (1 min)	youtube.com/watch?v=7gZ3ovuYNk8
Matthew 18 study	Dr Brant Pitre — Reconciliation in the Church	youtube.com/watch?v=IHvDRqmrNNY
Same Sunday readings	Fr Jacinto, CFR — Mercy requires correction	youtube.com/watch?v=zu5C-nbLukM
How to correct	Fr Gregory Pine, OP — Why you should correct your brother	youtube.com/watch?v=3m7xKhndDQM
St Monica & Augustine	EWTN — A Parent's Prayers (17-year campaign)	youtube.com/watch?v=rrFhZ8NTCbg
St Teresa of Calcutta	Bishop Barron on Saint Teresa of Calcutta	youtube.com/watch?v=Z-l15pSP9YE
Korean Martyrs	Catholic Saints & Feasts — Andrew Kim & Companions	youtube.com/watch?v=4vZpSaOsu1c
The Good Samaritan	EWTN — Pope Leo XIV: Don't Just Walk By	youtube.com/watch?v=8AB9gELk16Q





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Go and do likewise.

Luke 10:37

*“Where two or three are gathered in my name,
there am I in the midst of them.”
Matthew 18:20*

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