

Gospel Reflection by Fr. Christopher Szarke, Rector

Conflict is nothing new, although there may be a tendency to think that the conflict we've encountered is unique. These conflicts have repeatedly occurred in various forms. They just have more charge when they affect us directly.

Discipleship is how we are called to follow Christ. It's about how we deal properly with members of the community who have failed in their discipleship of Jesus. There is wise advice in Scripture about the way we ought to respond, step by step, when conflict exists. We're taught that God cares for every one of the sheep. No one is to be thrown away, no matter what they've done. There needs to be space for reconciliation.

Today's Gospel instructs us to meet with the person one-on-one. Ideally the person will be open to the conversation in order to listen and talk. If this does not work, we are to bring one or two others to witness conversation. If there is still a block in communication, then the community needs to become involved in order for healing to occur. Being a Christian means that we are called as a community to bring forth God's kingdom together. It means that we are called to pay attention to errors of behavior and call forth our sisters and brothers into the fullness of life that God calls us to live. Loving our neighbor sometimes means that we are called to challenge our apathy or our desire to avoid problems. We are called to do so lovingly.