

Where two or three are gathered...

Jesus and his disciples had climbed up a quiet hillside to a flat spot from which they could look back down on the city of Capernaum. Farther up was a grove of trees, but the afternoon was cool so they sat and warmed themselves under the bright sun.

Gathered in a circle, they sat facing each other. Since Peter and Andrew had gotten into a little squabble, Jesus was talking to them about brothers fighting against each other.

Peter and his brother Andrew looked glumly across the circle at the other pair of brothers, James and John. All four of them were recalling the many times that they had quarreled. Jesus smiled at them as he settled back on the grass to share his teaching.

“If your brother should commit some wrong against you,” Jesus said, “go and point out his fault, but keep it between the two of you.” Jesus watched them earnestly. No-one said anything so Jesus continued.

“If he listens to you, you have won your brother over.”

Thomas seemed smug without having a brother present, so he posed the inevitable question.

“What if he doesn’t listen?” Thomas asked.

Jesus was quick with his reply.

“If he doesn’t listen, summon another, so that every case may stand on the word of two or three witnesses.”

The disciples continued their exchange of “what-if” questions until they expanded to include the entire church.

“And,” one of them said, “what if the brother ignores even the church? What then?”

“Treat him as you would a Gentile or a tax collector,” Jesus directed.

He went on to reassure them with the words he had previously spoken to Simon Peter.

“Whatever you declare bound on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you declare loosed on earth shall be held loosed in heaven.”

Just then a flock of birds flashed overhead, disappearing



into the grove of trees higher up. The distraction made the disciples fall silent, leaving each with his own thoughts amid the beauty and peacefulness of the place.

Later the disciples began to wonder about how things would be after Jesus was gone. They asked many questions, thinking up all possible situations. To end their anxiety, Jesus assured them that even if he were physically absent he would still be with them.

“Again I tell you,” he said, “if two of you join your voices on earth to pray for anything whatever, it shall be granted you by my Father in heaven. Where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in their midst.”



The Gospel reminds us that whenever we gather in Jesus name, he is there! We find him in our Sunday celebration. We find him in our prayer around the family table. We also find him powerfully present in small faith-sharing and Bible study groups. Because he lives in each of us, we see him reflected in the eyes of one another.