

COMMUNITY... A SPACE OF FAITH AND LOVE

"Oh, that today you would hear his voice"—we have sung with this Psalm 95; and this psalm helps us understand the importance of listening to the teachings the Lord offers us through His Word.

One of the teachings arising from this Sunday's Scripture readings is the importance of community—understanding community as a shared space of faith and love. From that faith and love springs a sign that fosters the growth of those who make up the community: fraternal correction.

We live in a society that, regrettably, seems made of glass; we cannot tolerate being told we have taken the wrong path; we do not like being corrected.

When they correct us, we get angry, we judge the other, and we say: "Who are you to judge me?"

That is why, grounded in the Word of God, we discover this Sunday the true meaning and purpose of fraternal correction.

1. Fraternal correction helps us see what we cannot see on our own.

When we have acted wrongly and caused harm to others—as well as to ourselves—we need other members of the community to help us see clearly. Sin tarnishes our reason and understanding, leaving us unable to recognize our own errors.

2. Fraternal correction must be the fruit of love: "I correct you because I love you and seek your good." Therefore, both the family and the church community are the proper settings for correction. It is

within our families—whether of faith or of blood—that we are most deeply loved.

Where a brother is corrected, there is no room for gossip, criticism, or judgment. We focus on the erroneous actions committed; we must never pass judgment on the person. Judgment of the person belongs to God alone.

That is why it is important to always offer correction with humility and mercy, recognizing that we ourselves are sinners first; in this way, the Lord always grants us a new opportunity because He loves us.

Let us recall the parable of the wheat and the weeds: while the disciples wanted to pull up the weeds once and for all, the owner of the field asked them to wait patiently, for the time of the harvest would come.

With God, we always have a chance, and fraternal correction should help us seize it.

3. When fraternal correction is not practiced, it opens the door to criticism, judgment, and gossip—and ultimately, to division.

4. Finally, we cannot exclude those who have erred from our prayers; God's power can transform every heart and enlighten the mind so that one may correct one's behavior.

When fraternal correction becomes necessary in our family or within the Church, let us pause before correcting and ask ourselves: "How would I like to be corrected?"

May our Mother in Heaven help us build families that are true communities of love. Amen.