

The Power of Binding and Loosing

The phrase “binding and loosing” originates from first-century Jewish legal and rabbinic terminology; it refers to the authority to make decisions on the people of God: “binding” meant “forbidding” and “loosing” meant “permitting.” When a rabbi declares an action forbidden by religious law, he was said to “bind” because he placed an obligation or restriction on the conscience. On the other hand, when a rabbi declares an action lawful or permissible, he was said to “loose” because he lifted the restriction. This idiom was used to describe authoritative decisions regarding religious rules, community standards, and interpretation of the Mosaic Law.

In the New Testament, the phrase “binding and loosing” is used by Jesus in the Gospel of Matthew: In Mt 16:19, Jesus gave this authority over His Church to Peter: “Whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.” In Mt 18:18, Jesus gave the authority to the other Apostles: “Amen, I say to you,



whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.” In this Christian context, Jesus gave the Apostles and the early Church the authority to make moral, doctrinal and disciplinary decisions, such as establishing rules or handling dissident members.

In the Catholic Church, the Pope is the successor to Peter, while the bishops are the successors to the Apostles. As such, the Pope and the bishops were handed down the authority to “bind” or “loose”. This authority covers excommunications, interdicts, suspensions and other penalties or sanctions. The binding action of exclusion, such as excommunications, reflect a real spiritual separation recognized by God; nonetheless, the pastoral goal of such “binding” actions, which are consistent with the message of Mt18:15-20, is to lead the sinner back to repentance and salvation.

Mt 18:19-20 pertain to authority in communal prayer and gathering; Jesus said to His disciples, “Amen, I say to you, if two of you agree on earth about anything for which they are to pray, it shall be granted to them by my heavenly Father. For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.” Here, the disciples receive the power of shared prayer; where two or three of them are gathered together in agreement to pray about something, Jesus would be there with them. Contrary to what a lot of Protestants believe, these verses do not mean that any two or three persons could simply pray together and whatever they ask for will be granted to them.

In terms of the Sacraments, we usually think of the Sacrament of Reconciliation whenever we hear the phrase “binding and loosing.” In the Gospel of John, Jesus breathed on His disciples and said to them, “Receive the holy Spirit. Whose sins you forgive are forgiven them, and whose sins you retain are retained.” (Jn 20:23) With regards to the Sacrament of Matrimony, the authority of binding and loosing does not apply to valid marriages. The Church holds that a valid marriage is permanent until death; no human power – including the Pope, a bishop, a church tribunal, or even the consensual parties involved in a civil divorce – has the authority to dissolve a valid, consummated sacramental marriage. However, the Church has the authority to investigate and declare whether a true marriage bond ever existed. In the case of an invalid marriage, the Church has the authority to grant an annulment; an annulment is a

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declaration of nullity – a formal decision by a Church tribunal which states that a true, binding marriage bond was never formed.

PARISH ANNOUNCEMENTS

The OCIA Period of Inquiry is now open: During this period, people who have the desire to become Catholic ask questions about the Catholic faith and the OCIA program. All are welcome to contact Fr. Bill or any parish member, join in the celebration of the Eucharist and join the various activities of the parish. If you know anyone who has an interest in becoming Catholic, now is the time to reach out to them and pray for them.

The Faith Formation program for our teens will begin today. The teens will be meeting in the Youth Room after the 10:30am Mass. We welcome all teens to come and learn our Catholic faith together!

We are offering Chinese language classes next year in the Spring. Classes are held on Saturdays and Sundays. Spring Semester begins on January 9 and 10, 2027. The 2027 Spring Schedule have been posted in our church website: hnojatl.org.

If you would like to practice conversing in the English language, come and join us at our new English classes in the Conference Room after the 10:30am Mass!

The 2nd Floor of our Education Building is almost ready, we are currently in the process of complying with several requirements from Gwinnett County and the City of Norcross in order to get the Building Permit. We will have a total of 5 new classrooms. These classrooms will be used for Religious Education classes, Chinese and English Language classes, and other church purposes. In the meantime, we need to buy whiteboards, 50" TVs and other classroom equipment, a medium-size copier and printing supplies. Our initial budget is \$4,000. If you would like to make a donation, please use the Religious Education envelopes for this special donation.

Fr. Bill will administer the sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick in the Sanctuary after the 10:30am Mass today.

Fr. Bill will be attending the Atlanta Priests Convocation from September 15 to 17. There will be no noon Mass on Tuesday, September 15 and Wednesday, September 16.

Prayer List: Bian Cheng Zhang, Susan Lee, Michael Tan, Bian Meiyi, Chen Shupeng, Chen Jianxin, Liang Chenjing and Xu Taicheng.
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Mass Schedule	Confessions	Bible Study
Sundays 10:30 AM (Chinese)	By Appointment	Wednesdays 10:00 AM (Chinese)
Sundays 2:00 PM (English)		
	Anointing of the Sick	Eucharistic Adoration
Mondays 12:00 PM (English)	First Sundays after 10:30 AM Mass	Sundays 9:00 to 10:00 AM
Tuesdays 12:00 PM (English)	First Fridays after 6:30 PM Mass	
Wednesdays 12:00 PM (Chinese)		
Fridays 12:00 PM (English)		
First Friday 6:30 PM (English)		