

21st Sunday in Ordinary Time



Maintaining a proper relationship with God is an essential part of finding freedom from the chaos brought on by family addiction. The self-centered and egotistical nature of addiction often impacts us without us realizing it. When things do not go our way, we point fingers and look for reasons outside of ourselves for why life has gotten out of control. Our self-image is changed and our capacity to rely on God seems to leave us.

Saint Maximilian Kolbe summarizes the slow fade away from a life of true faith and warns us of indifference: "The great danger in today's world, pervaded as it is by consumerism, is the desolation and anguish born of a complacent yet covetous heart, the feverish pursuit of frivolous pleasures, and a blunted conscience. Whenever our interior life becomes caught up in its own interests and concerns, there is no longer room for others, no place for the poor. God's voice is no longer heard, the quiet joy of his love is no longer felt, and the desire to do good fades."

Put simply, we need stop playing the role of god. A thorough First Step helps us recognize the consequences of directing our own lives and the challenges that come from attempting to manage ourselves and others. In Step Two, we focus on shifting power into the hands of a new Manager. Saint Paul describes that all is of God in this Sunday's Second Reading:

*Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God!
How inscrutable are his judgments and how unsearchable his ways!
For who has known the mind of the Lord
or who has been his counselor?
Or who has given the Lord anything
that he may be repaid?
For from him and through him and for him are all things.
To him be glory forever. Amen.*

Intellectually, we may have come to recognize God's role in creation and salvation. In practice, turning our will and our lives over to the care of God requires trust, faith, and developing a proper relationship with our Creator.

A variety of factors can play a role in the relationship that we have with our Eternal Father. Our relationships with earthly authority mold our understanding of God and how He is involved in our lives. Social factors, personal expectations, cultural norms, and other life experiences contribute as well.

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Before we exercise turning our will over to God, we must first come to believe that God, through the saving power of Jesus Christ and the presence of the Holy Spirit, can restore us to sanity. Even Saint Paul reaches aspects of God that he can't completely wrap his head around. Not having all the answers, he simply states his marvel for the Lord. We tend to want to know it all before putting faith into something. In the world created by God, that is simply not possible. Our attempts to have it all figured out are, in some way, attempts to be the god of our own lives.

Saint Augustine speaks to this when he said, "Seek not to understand that you may believe, but believe that you may understand." In recovery, developing a relationship with God often begins with a desperate plea for change and an acknowledgment that we need to do something different.

Augustine adds, "To prolong prayer is to have the heart throbbing with continued pious emotion towards Him to whom we pray. For in most cases prayer consists more in groaning than in speaking, in tears rather than in words. But He set our tears in His sight, and our groaning is not hidden from Him who made all things by the word, and does not need human words."

We do not need the right words, nor do we need to meet certain requirements before entering into a new or deeper relationship with God. We believe and, as a result, we gain understanding. We can delight in announcing "To Him be glory forever!" We get one step closer to wishing that His will, not ours, be done.

- How have you attempted to play the god of your own life and family? How has that worked out for you?
- What factors have influenced your relationship with God and your understanding of His involvement in your life?
- What keeps you desperate to maintain a close relationship with God?

What About the Kids?

Join us for an exclusive event to view the premier of Jim Wahlberg's new film, 'What About the Kids?'

- September 8, 2020 at 9:00 PM ET/6:00 PM PT
- View addiction through the lens of an 8-year-old Catholic girl whose parents are addicted to opioids
- Virtual premier will feature a screening of the film and conversation with the director/writer about his personal connections with addiction
- For more information visit: whataboutthekidsfilm.com

Sunday Mass Readings this Week

1st Reading: Isaiah 22:19-23

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 138:1-2, 2-3, 6, 8

2nd Reading: Romans 11:33-36

Gospel: Matthew 16:13-20