

## Twenty-second Sunday in Ordinary Time



In recovery from the family disease of addiction, our personal freedom is dependent upon three guiding principles: self-discovery, separating our hope from another's behavior, and loving detachment. Practicing these principles yields a life of spiritual health and contentment, yet it takes patience, trust, the help of others, and humility to get there. Humility is both a seed and a fruit of our recovery—something that we grow into as we allow God to order our lives.

The true source of humility does not have to rest in dramatic moments of humiliation, but instead can be found in regular acts of conversion. "Conversion is accomplished in daily life by gestures of reconciliation, concern for the poor, exercise and defense of justice and right, by the admission of faults to one's brethren, fraternal correction, revision of life, examination of conscience, spiritual direction, acceptance of suffering, endurance of persecution for the sake of righteousness," notes the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (1435).

Those who exemplify humility often do so with joy and gladness in their hearts, even when going through hardship. On August 27, we celebrate the Feast of Saint Monica, a great example of Christian humility in the midst of family addiction. The steadfast prayer life and peace that Monica was able to maintain during episodes of chaos and confusion in her household were reflective of her trust in God's will. She did her part to remain faithful to the work that was put in front of her while being patient with the response she had gotten from the Lord (and waited 18 years for the conversion of her son, Augustine).

This Sunday's First Reading speaks more about humility, adding the importance of staying right-sized, listening, and sharing with those in need:

*My child, conduct your affairs with humility,  
and you will be loved more than a giver of gifts.  
Humble yourself the more, the greater you are,  
and you will find favor with God.  
What is too sublime for you, seek not,  
into things beyond your strength search not.  
The mind of a sage appreciates proverbs,  
and an attentive ear is the joy of the wise.  
Water quenches a flaming fire,  
and alms atone for sins.*

It is not the smartest who have the most success in recovery, but those who are faithful, available, and teachable. Believing we have all the answers can hinder our chances of experiencing a spiritual awakening. The conditions for humility and daily exercises of conversion are needed each day.

## Reflection Questions

The gifts that God gives us, including the removal of some character defects, are not confined to us. They are an invitation to use what we have found in order to share hope with others. This is summarized beautifully in what is known as the Seventh Step Prayer:

My Creator,  
I am now willing that you shall have all of me,  
good and bad.  
I pray that you now remove from me  
every single defect of character  
that stands in the way of my usefulness  
to you and my fellows.  
Grant me strength as I go out from here  
to do your bidding.  
Amen.

The Twelve Steps and our personal recovery hinge upon us giving back to God and others the many gifts that we have found in the process. This is also true of the Christian lifestyle, as it rings throughout Jesus' command to love God and neighbor. As God works miracles in us, we humbly ask Him to direct our lives so that we can be a beneficial presence to others and bear abundant fruit.

- What practices and routines have been helpful in adopting the principles of self-discovery, separate-but-hopeful, and loving detachment?
- How have you noticed yourself as a beneficial presence to others as a result of your recovery?
- Is there a Saint to whom you have a prayerful devotion or who has aided in your recovery?

### Saint Monica Prayer

St. Monica,  
I need your prayers.  
You know exactly how I'm feeling because you once felt it yourself. I'm hurting, hopeless, and in despair.  
I desperately want my [loved one] to return to Christ in his Church but I can't do it alone.  
I need God's help.  
Please join me in begging the Lord's powerful grace to flow into my [loved one's] life.  
Ask the Lord Jesus to soften their heart, prepare a path for their conversion, and activate the Holy Spirit in their life. Amen.

## Sunday Mass Readings this Week

**First Reading:** Sirach 3:17-18, 20, 28-29

**Responsorial Psalm:** Psalm 68:4-5, 6-7, 10-11

**Second Reading:** Hebrews 12:18-19, 22-24a

**Gospel:** Luke 14:1, 7-14