

Twenty-second Sunday in Ordinary Time



Three ingredients that are crucial to recovery and how it's done are honesty, open-mindedness, and willingness. When practiced together, we experience humility, unity, and a shared vision of service to others. Humility is not thinking less of ourselves, but thinking of ourselves less often. It 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 rest in dramatic moments of humiliation (although they can be helpful to be rid of denial), 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 giving to 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 our 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 from lust addiction and sexual compulsions 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 thinking of yourself less often?
- 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?

Catholic in Recovery Resources Online

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- Articles published weekly related to various types of addictions, the impact of addiction on families, practical application of the Twelve Steps and sacraments, and more
- Full directory of virtual and in-person meetings available
- Read testimonials of CIR community members
- Enroll in the Catholic in Recovery Novena
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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