

Twenty-seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time



Faith tends to be a misunderstood concept, even among Christians. Faith is not an alternative to science and logical thought, but an attitude of trust in the presence of God. Faith keeps us open to what God can and will do if we seek Him with an open mind and heart. Throughout our recovery from the family disease of addiction, we are asked to put faith and trust in God doing for us and our families what we could not do for ourselves.

This attitude is formed and grown by working the first three steps of recovery. We admit that our own resources, ideas, and plans were limited. We were powerless. As we relied more and more on our will power and control, our lives became unmanageable. We need to transition out of self-sufficiency and begin relying on something far greater than ourselves. We put faith in God, trusting that He will guide, protect, and transform us.

Step 3 invites us to live each day with real faith—not just some mental understanding that God exists and that Jesus loves us. Real faith, per Bishop Robert Barron, "Goes way beyond a vague intellectual ascent. It looks like trust and confidence. It looks like really turning your life over to God." Jesus shares a similar idea with his followers in this week's Gospel Reading:

*The apostles said to the Lord, "Increase our faith."
The Lord replied,
"If you have faith the size of a mustard seed,
you would say to this mulberry tree,
'Be uprooted and planted in the sea,' and it would
obey you."*

The above Gospel passage comes immediately after Jesus tells his disciples, "If [your brother] sins against you seven times in a day, and seven times comes back to you and says, 'I repent,' forgive him." Forgiveness for ourselves and others requires grace.

Jesus is describing the amazing things that can happen when we live with confidence in the Power already at work in us. The more we surrender to Him, the greater things can happen. We are merely stewards of the life God has entrusted to us, and we learn that faith and trust are increased the more we exercise them throughout our recovery.

When we, alone, attempt to unbind ourselves from the insanity of family addiction, it seems to spiral even more. Anguish appears in the short-term and hope deteriorates over time. Therefore, our program of action is not so much self-help in nature but better described as a *God, help!* program.

Reflection Questions

Real faith is necessary for a growing ability to forgive and receive love from God and others. As the Lord's Prayer and many of the Steps remind us, we have needed to be forgiven and are called to extend the same mercy to others. We should keep in mind that we do not claim to be perfect servants of the Lord. Rather, we are trying to make spiritual progress through faith and trust. We must also learn to forgive *and* maintain the necessary boundaries for the benefit of ourselves and those we love.

The Spirit of Jesus is strong, loving, and wise, reflecting the light of God and attracting others to live by faith. Aided by the honest and humble nature of recovery fellowships, this Spirit is with us, lives in us, and acts through us. Let us share our spirit with others and put our trust in God as encouraged by this Sunday's Second Reading:

*For God did not give us a spirit of cowardice
but rather of power and love and self-control.
So do not be ashamed of your testimony to our Lord, nor
of me, a prisoner for his sake;
but bear your share of hardship for the gospel with the
strength that comes from God.*

- How do you exercise trust in God through your recovery journey and daily spiritual practices?
- When have the limits of your own power over alcohol and addiction been most apparent to you?
- How do you experience the Spirit of Christ with you, living in you, and acting through you?

Catholic in Recovery Resources Online

Visit catholicinrecovery.com for a variety of resources related to addiction recovery and the Catholic Church:

- 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
- Pre-order *The Catholic in Recovery Workbook*

Sunday Mass Readings this Week

First Reading: Habakkuk 1:2-3; 2:2-4

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 95:1-2, 6-7, 8-9

Second Reading: 2 Timothy 1:6-8, 13-14

Gospel: Luke 17:5-10