

28th Sunday in Ordinary Time



Psalm 23, often referenced during times of grief and loss, sets the tone for this week's Sunday Mass Readings. It reminds us that we are fully equipped to handle life's challenges when we walk the path of the Lord. Even in the midst of temptation and uncertainty, we can rely upon God's protection. Hear this week's Responsorial Psalm:

*The Lord is my shepherd;
I shall not want.
In verdant pastures he gives me repose;
beside restful waters he leads me;
he refreshes my soul.
He guides me along right paths
for the sake of his name.
Even though I walk through the valley of the
shadow of death,
I will fear no evil, for you are with me;
your rod and your staff comfort me.*

We have been given an invitation to drop what we have and follow Christ. Our lustful attachments and sexual compulsions kept us isolated in hopelessness, and we could only tolerate life—the good and the bad—until our obsession was quenched by acting out. Upon accepting God's invitation, oftentimes in our darkest moment, we are met with a sense of belonging among others who seem to understand.

Last week, we spent time reflecting on the Ninth Step Promises and their similarity to the message expressed by Saint Paul's Letter to the Philippians. This week's Second Reading builds on this theme while acknowledging the value of sharing experience, strength, and hope:

*I know how to live in humble circumstances;
I know also how to live with abundance.
In every circumstance and in all things
I have learned the secret of being well fed and of
going hungry,
of living in abundance and of being in need.
I can do all things in him who strengthens me.
Still, it was kind of you to share in my distress.*

Whether we find ourselves in a time of desolation or abundance, the spiritual principles of twelve-step recovery and the sacramental life of the Church guide us through all seasons. Trusting that He will make all things right takes time, practice, and the support of our brothers in Christ. We often find tangible comfort from those who have walked the path before us.

Few know powerlessness more than individuals and family members impacted by addiction. We've wrestled with layers of denial that make it challenging to see the truth from the lies. As darkness ensues, we must reach for the helping hand of God and others to bring us to stable ground. In John's Gospel, Christ promises, "If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask for whatever you want and it will be done for you" (John 15:7).

We are called to the banquet of the Lord, regardless of our social status or other qualifying factors. God just wants us to show up. Similar to the way we gather from all walks of life for recovery meetings, we should expect to find some unusual and peculiar guests. Jesus summarizes this phenomenon as he enlightens the social and religious elite of his time by telling a parable of a king who throws an extravagant party for his son:

He said to his servants, 'The feast is ready, but those who were invited were not worthy to come. Go out, therefore, into the main roads and invite to the feast whomever you find.'
The servants went out into the streets and gathered all they found, bad and good alike, and the hall was filled with guests.

Whether facing seasons of joy, sadness, pain, or freedom, the Lord is our shepherd. He finds us, strengthens us, and asks that we do the same for others. We are invited to respond to His call and arrive at His banquet, one day at a time.

- How have you weathered the highs and lows of recovery?
 - What spiritual tools have been helpful to find peace during challenging times and balance when all seems to be going well?

- What is going on in your life today that demands your trust in God and willingness to take the next right step?

Catholic in Recovery Resources Online

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

- Blog articles published each week related to various types of addiction, topics related to recovery, and practical experiences with the twelve steps and sacraments
- Full meeting directory with a variety of virtual and in-person meetings available
- Testimonials from CIR participants and opportunities to engage community

Sunday Mass Readings this Week

1st Reading: Isaiah 25:6-10a

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 23:1-3a, 3b-4, 5, 6

2nd Reading: Philippians 4:12-14, 19-20

Gospel: Matthew 22:1-14