

Twenty-sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time



The author of the Letter to the Hebrews writes, "The word of God is living and effective, sharper than any two-edged sword, penetrating even between soul and spirit, joints and marrow, and able to discern reflections and thoughts of the heart" (Hebrews 4:12). For those of us recovering from lust addiction, this rings true. God's word reveals where we have been deceived, pierces our rationalizations, and invites us to walk in the light. Recovery readings often do the same—reminding us of truths we once resisted but now rely upon for freedom.

This Sunday's first reading warns us, "Woe to the complacent in Zion!" (Amos 6:1). We know complacency well. After achieving periods of sobriety, we may become comfortable, forgetting the devastation lust once caused. Our "built-in forgetter" makes it easy to minimize past harm or convince ourselves that a little compromise won't hurt. Yet complacency is dangerous—it opens the door to relapse.

Many of us hit rock bottom before surrendering. Once given a second chance, we swore never to return to that dark place. But good intentions are not enough to protect us. Sustained recovery requires a daily surrender, constant vigilance, and regular practice of spiritual principles.

Saint Paul's encouragement in this Sunday's second reading gives us a framework: "Pursue righteousness, devotion, faith, love, patience, and gentleness" (1 Timothy 6:11). These are not abstract virtues—they are daily disciplines. They shape how we respond to temptation, how we relate to others, and how we see ourselves. By walking with newcomers and sharing honestly about our struggles, we keep these virtues alive and protect our own recovery.

Seeking comfort is natural, but when pleasure becomes our highest priority, lust quickly reclaims its power. We must first seek God's will, which brings lasting peace and joy.

Jesus highlights this in the Gospel parable of the rich man and Lazarus (Luke 16:19–21):

"There was a rich man who dressed in purple garments and fine linen and dined sumptuously each day. And lying at his door was a poor man named Lazarus, covered with sores, who would gladly have eaten his fill of the scraps that fell from the rich man's table. Dogs even used to come and lick his sores."

Lazarus is comforted in heaven, while the rich man is left in torment (Luke 16:22–23). The rich man begs for mercy, but Abraham tells him, "If they will not listen to Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded if someone should rise from the dead" (Luke 16:31).

This parable reminds us that serving lust is ultimately serving emptiness. Each time we choose sobriety over secrecy, prayer over fantasy, and honesty over isolation, we strengthen our spiritual foundation and keep complacency at bay. The work is daily, but the fruit is freedom—freedom to live with integrity, to love with sincerity, and to point others toward the healing power of God.

Reflection Questions

- How has complacency threatened your progress in lust recovery?
- What practices help you “pursue righteousness, devotion, faith, love, patience, and gentleness”?
- What does the parable of the rich man and Lazarus reveal about the dangers of serving comfort instead of God?

Living the Steps Begins October 1

*Join the Catholic in Recovery community
as we journey together through the Twelve Steps*

- Gatherings will take place via Zoom Wednesday mornings at 9:00a ET/6:00a PT for 22 weeks (ending March 11)
- Work through the Twelve Steps of recovery integrating Catholic faith using *The Catholic in Recovery Workbook*
- Small group breakouts based on addiction type and gender
- Visit catholicinrecovery.com/livingthesteps to learn more and register

Sunday Mass Readings this Week

First Reading: Amos 6:1a, 4-7

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 146:7, 8-9, 9-10

Second Reading: 1 Timothy 6:11-16

Gospel: Luke 16:19-31