

Twenty-seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time



Faith is often confused with wishful thinking, but in recovery we come to see it as trust in God's presence and care. For those of us who grew up in dysfunctional homes, faith is essential to move from fear and self-reliance into freedom and healing. It allows us to believe that God can work through our wounds and bring restoration, even when we cannot see how. Faith opens our hearts to the possibility of change and keeps us willing to let God shape our lives.

This faith grows as we practice the principles of recovery. We admit that the coping strategies of our childhood—control, perfectionism, people-pleasing, or withdrawal—were powerless to bring peace. Our lives had become unmanageable, bound by fear and unhealthy roles. To move forward, we must shift from self-sufficiency to trust in God, who offers us the courage to face our past and the wisdom to live differently.

Faith is not just intellectual agreement that God exists—it is surrender. Bishop Robert Barron notes, "Real faith goes way beyond a vague intellectual ascent. It looks like trust and confidence. It looks like really turning your life over to God." Jesus makes this point in this Sunday's Gospel (Luke 17:5–6):

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."

Jesus offers this teaching right after telling His followers to forgive again and again (Luke 17:3–4). For adult children, forgiveness may mean releasing resentments toward our parents, siblings, or even ourselves. Faith helps us accept that God can heal what feels impossible to forgive.

Even a mustard seed of faith can move us toward freedom. Each time we tell the truth instead of hiding, set a boundary instead of people-pleasing, or trust God instead of falling back into fear, we are living out real faith. As we exercise it daily, our trust grows stronger, and our healing deepens.

Trying to untangle our lives on our own only makes the knots tighter. Recovery teaches us that our journey is not self-help but more like *God, help!* Faith allows us to experience God's love and strength, giving us courage to face pain and hope to persevere.

This faith also anchors our ability to forgive and receive forgiveness. The Steps that lead to honest self-inventory, confession, and amends mirror Jesus' call to mercy. Though we are not perfect, faith helps us make progress, one day at a time.

The Spirit of Jesus empowers us to let go of fear and live with love and self-control. As Paul writes in this Sunday's second reading (2 Timothy 1:7-8):

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.

Reflection Questions

- How has faith helped you move from fear and self-reliance into greater freedom?
- What does "mustard seed faith" look like in your journey of breaking old family patterns?
- Where do you need God's grace to help you forgive yourself or others from your past?

CIR Retreats Happening this Fall

Strengthen your recovery and deepen your faith with fellow community members at a CIR retreat

- Weekend retreat in Menlo Park, CA October 17-19
- 1-day retreat in Jensen Beach, FL on November 8
- Find inspiration, guidance, and encouragement through testimonies, workshops, CIR meetings, sacraments, reflection time, and recovery fellowship
- Find more information and register today at catholicinrecovery.com/events

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