

Twenty-seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time



Faith is sometimes misunderstood, even by those in recovery. It is not a blind denial of reality or a substitute for discipline, but an attitude of trust in God's presence and action. For those of us in recovery from lust addiction, faith means turning from the illusion of control, secrecy, and self-will, and placing our trust in God to do for us what we could not do for ourselves. Faith is what keeps us open to His healing power, even when temptation seems overwhelming.

This posture of faith grows as we practice the first three Steps. We admit that our own resources, ideas, and strategies were powerless to stop our compulsive behavior. Lust had made our lives unmanageable. The only way forward was to let go of self-sufficiency and lean into the strength of God, who guides, protects, and transforms us when we let Him.

Faith calls us to live daily with surrender—not merely believing in God's existence, but actually entrusting our entire lives to Him. Bishop Robert Barron explains, "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 illustrates this reality 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."*

This passage immediately follows Jesus' command to forgive repeatedly (Luke 17:3–4). For us, this includes forgiving ourselves for the damage caused by lust and extending mercy to others we may have hurt. Faith gives us the grace to let go of shame and resentment so that healing can continue.

Jesus makes it clear that even the smallest measure of real faith can transform our lives. Every time we choose honesty over secrecy, accountability over isolation, or prayer over fantasy, we exercise this mustard-seed faith. Over time, trust grows stronger, and lust loses its grip on us.

When we rely only on our own willpower, we end up tightening the chains of addiction. Recovery reminds us that our program is not about self-help but more an action that cries out *God, help!* Faith sets us free, enabling us to face temptation with courage, knowing God provides strength one day at a time.

Real faith is also essential for forgiveness and reconciliation. The Steps that lead us to confession, amends, and restitution mirror Christ's call to mercy. We do not claim to be perfect, but through faith we make steady progress.

The Spirit of Jesus empowers us with courage, love, and self-control. He reminds us not to be ashamed of our past but to use it as testimony of God's saving power, as Saint Paul urges 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 does your faith help you resist the illusion of control that lust once promised?
- What does “mustard seed faith” look like in your daily practice of sexual sobriety?
- How has faith helped you to forgive yourself and others in recovery?

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