

## Reflection Questions

- When have you felt guarded and protected by God during your recovery journey?
- What helps you stay faithful in prayer when you feel disconnected or discouraged?
- How can you let others “hold up your hands” when you grow weary in your healing work?

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## **Sunday Mass Readings this Week**

**First Reading:** Exodus 17:8-13

**Responsorial Psalm:** Psalm 121:1-2, 3-4, 5-6, 7-8

**Second Reading:** 2 Timothy 3:14-4:2

**Gospel:** Luke 18:1-8

## **Twenty-ninth Sunday in Ordinary Time**



*The Lord is your guardian; the Lord is your shade;  
he is beside you at your right hand.  
The sun shall not harm you by day,  
nor the moon by night.  
The Lord will guard you from all evil;  
he will guard your life.  
The Lord will guard your coming and your going,  
both now and forever."*

Psalm 121 is a prayer of trust and assurance—a blessing for those setting out on a long and uncertain journey. For those of us who grew up in dysfunctional homes, it offers deep comfort. Our early lives may have lacked safety, consistency, or protection, but through recovery we are learning that God is our guardian now. He watches over every step of our healing, day and night.

Faith and prayer sustain us along this journey. Still, as recovery literature notes, "All of us, without exception, pass through times when we can pray only with the greatest exertion of will. Occasionally we go even further than this. We are seized with a rebellion so sickening that we simply won't pray" (*Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*, p. 105). When we feel disconnected from God, our old instincts to withdraw or self-protect may resurface. Yet we are called to stay close to Him even when the connection feels dry or distant.

Prayer is not a transaction—it is a relationship. We pray not to control outcomes but to align ourselves with God's will and receive His strength. Step 11 teaches us to seek this "conscious contact" daily, asking for knowledge of His will and the power to carry it out.

Saint Paul reminds us in this Sunday's second reading to stay faithful to what grounds us (2 Timothy 3:14–15):

*Remain faithful to what you have learned and believed,  
because you know from whom you learned it,  
and that from infancy you have known the sacred Scriptures,  
which are capable of giving you wisdom for salvation  
through faith in Christ Jesus.*

When our faith falters, we can return to Scripture, fellowship, and prayer—sources of truth that remind us we are not alone.

We see the same truth in the story of Moses interceding for Israel (Exodus 17:11–13):

*As long as Moses kept his hands raised up,  
Israel had the better of the fight,  
but when he let his hands rest,  
Amalek had the better of the fight.  
Moses' hands, however, grew tired;  
so they put a rock in place for him to sit on.  
Meanwhile Aaron and Hur supported his hands,  
one on one side and one on the other,  
so that his hands remained steady till sunset.  
And Joshua mowed down Amalek and his people  
with the edge of the sword.*

Moses could not persevere on his own. He needed others to help him stay connected to God. In recovery, we find that our healing depends on connection—with God, with others, and with our truest selves. When we feel tired or afraid, trusted companions can help us lift our hands toward heaven until strength returns.

Our battles are not with flesh and blood but with the unseen forces that try to pull us back into fear (Ephesians 6:12). God surrounds us with His protection, and through community, prayer, and faith, we learn that we no longer have to fight alone. The same God who guards our steps today will continue to guide us through the darkness into light.