

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."*

These words from Psalm 121 are sung as a prayer of trust and protection. Traditionally, this psalm was a blessing for travelers embarking on a dangerous journey. It reminds us that God is not confined by time or place, but walks with us through every step of the road ahead. As family and friends of those affected by addiction, we too are on a difficult journey that demands faith, humility, and a continual turning toward God for strength.

In recovery, we learn that prayer and trust are vital companions on this path. Yet, 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). These moments can come when fear or exhaustion make us question whether God still hears us.

When prayer becomes dry or when our trust feels thin, we might be tempted to return to old patterns—worrying, controlling, or carrying what was never ours to fix. But God invites us to stay faithful in prayer, even when we do not feel His presence. The goal is not to change His will, but to seek it and find the power to carry it out (Step 11).

Saint Paul encourages us to root our faith in what is enduring. In this Sunday's second reading, he writes (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.*

This invitation to return to Scripture and prayer reminds us that God's Word can guide us through the darkest valleys. The Old Testament reading shows what "conscious contact with God" looks like in action (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 hold up his arms alone—he needed help. In the same way, we need fellowship and prayer partners to help us stay connected to God. When we grow weary, others can support our spiritual posture until our strength returns.

Recovery reminds us that our battle is not just against addiction itself, but against fear, resentment, and despair. As Ephesians 6:12 says, "Our struggle is not with flesh and blood but with the powers of this present darkness." We are not alone. God guards us, walks beside us, and surrounds us with companions for the journey.

When prayer feels dry or faith feels weak, our task is simply to keep showing up—to lift our hands, even trembling, toward the One who guards our life.

Reflection Questions

- When have you experienced a "dry season" in prayer, and how did God carry you through it?
- How does the image of Moses being supported by Aaron and Hur reflect the role of fellowship in your recovery?
- In what ways has God shown Himself to be your "guardian" and protector in your family journey?

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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