

Thirtieth Sunday in Ordinary Time



When the Pharisees questioned why Jesus ate with tax collectors and sinners, He answered, “Those who are healthy do not need a physician, but the sick do. I have not come to call the righteous to repentance but sinners” (Luke 5:31–32). Many of us who grew up in dysfunctional homes spent years trying to appear “healthy” and self-sufficient. Yet our healing began the moment we admitted our need for God and others. Recovery teaches us to return daily to the Lord with humility, openness, and trust in His mercy.

Conversion, as the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* explains, is a daily practice: “Conversion is accomplished in daily life by gestures of reconciliation, concern for the poor, exercise and defense of justice and right, by admission of faults to one's brethren, fraternal correction, revision of life, examination of conscience, spiritual direction, acceptance of suffering, endurance of persecution for the sake of righteousness. Taking up one's cross each day and following Jesus is the surest way of penance” (1435).

Step 2—“Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity”—invites us to move from self-reliance to faith. As we let God guide us, we find restoration and freedom. This Sunday's first reading offers reassurance that God hears the humble (Sirach 35:15–20):

*The Lord is a God of justice,
who knows no favorites.
Though not unduly partial toward the weak,
yet he hears the cry of the oppressed.
The Lord is not deaf to the wail of the orphan,
nor to the widow when she pours out her complaint.
The one who serves God willingly is heard;
his petition reaches the heavens.*

As children, we may have learned to hide our weaknesses or bury our emotions to stay safe. In recovery, God calls us to bring our whole selves—bruised and imperfect—to Him. Our honesty becomes the soil where healing grows. In community, we learn that our shared weakness is not shameful but sacred; it connects us to others and allows grace to flow freely.

This Sunday's Gospel contrasts two kinds of prayer (Luke 18:10–14):

*“Two people went up to the temple area to pray; one was a Pharisee and the other was a tax collector.
The Pharisee took up his position and spoke this prayer to himself,
'O God, I thank you that I am not like the rest of humanity—greedy, dishonest, adulterous—or even like this tax collector.
I fast twice a week, and I pay tithes on my whole income.'
But the tax collector stood off at a distance and would not even raise his eyes to heaven but beat his breast and prayed,
'O God, be merciful to me a sinner.'
I tell you, the latter went home justified, not the former;
for whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and the one who humbles himself will be exalted.”*

Many of us learned to perform—to look good, say the right things, and hide our pain. But real recovery begins when we let the mask fall. The tax collector’s humility models the kind of honesty that brings peace. God already knows our story—our strengths, wounds, and struggles—and He loves us as we are.

When we take our own inventory rather than others’, we discover a new kind of freedom. We can stop living out old family roles and begin walking in truth. Christ doesn’t ask for perfection, only the courage to follow Him with an open heart. One day at a time, we learn that humility is not humiliation—it is the gateway to grace and lasting healing.

- How has admitting your weakness opened the door to healing and connection?
- What prevents you from praying like the tax collector—with full honesty and surrender?
- How does humility help you break free from old family roles and live more authentically?

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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