

Thirty-third Sunday in Ordinary Time



As the Church year draws to a close, the readings invite us to reflect on endings and endurance. Apocalyptic Scripture can sound dramatic, but its purpose is not to frighten—it is to strengthen our faith during times of trial. For those of us recovering from lust addiction, this call to perseverance feels especially relevant.

Before recovery, our lives were often marked by chaos, shame, and a constant cycle of despair. It felt as though the world within us was collapsing. Yet through grace, what looked like the end became the beginning of new life. God brought order out of the wreckage, peace out of fear.

Like strong medicine, these readings challenge us to take our spiritual growth seriously. They warn us not to indulge fear or self-pity but to stay focused on grace and discipline. When we dwell on temptation, resentment, or guilt, our spirit weakens. But when we fix our hearts on God's mercy, we are renewed.

Saint Paul provides the model for steady, humble progress (2 Thessalonians 3:7-12):

*You know how one must imitate us.
For we did not act in a disorderly way among you...
Rather, we wanted to present ourselves as a model for you,
so that you might imitate us.
In fact, when we were with you,
we instructed you that if anyone was unwilling to work,
neither should that one eat.
We hear that some are conducting themselves among you in a disorderly way,
by not keeping busy but minding the business of others.
Such people we instruct and urge in the Lord Jesus Christ to work quietly and to eat their own food.*

Paul describes what recovery looks like in action: discipline, self-awareness, and daily effort. He cautions against idleness—what happens when we stop doing the spiritual work and instead drift back into old thinking. Lust feeds on that kind of distraction. But when we stay committed to prayer, accountability, and service, we participate in the quiet work of grace.

The daily work of recovery—whether it's reaching out to a sponsor, journaling, or practicing gratitude—is not glamorous, but it's holy. It's how the temple of our lives is rebuilt. Over time, we learn that faithfulness in small things creates strength for the larger challenges ahead.

This season of the Church year reminds us that endurance is not about striving harder, but about trusting deeper. When we work quietly, pray humbly, and serve others, God brings peace to our hearts and order to our lives.

Reflection Questions

- What daily habits help you stay steady and patient in your recovery?
- How do you recognize when you've drifted into idleness or self-centeredness?
- What does perseverance in faith look like for you when temptation or fear arises?

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Sunday Mass Readings this Week

First Reading: Malachi 3:19-20a

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 98:5-6, 7-8, 9

Second Reading: 2 Thessalonians 3:7-12

Gospel: Luke 21:5-19