

For many adult children of dysfunctional homes, learning to live one day at a time can be surprisingly difficult. Growing up in unpredictable environments often taught us to stay focused on the past or the future. We replay painful memories, trying to understand what happened, or we anxiously anticipate what might go wrong next. The present moment can feel unfamiliar or even unsafe.

Recovery gently invites us to return to today. Instead of living in constant vigilance, we begin practicing trust in small steps. We learn that healing does not happen all at once. It unfolds gradually as we allow God and supportive relationships to reshape the patterns we developed earlier in life.

The season of Lent encourages us to reflect on where we place our hope. Many adult children learned to rely heavily on their own control, perfectionism, or people-pleasing in order to survive. These strategies may have helped us navigate difficult childhood environments, but they can eventually leave us feeling exhausted and disconnected from our true selves.

Saint Paul describes a different source of life in this Sunday's second reading (Romans 8:8-11):

Those who are in the flesh cannot please God. But you are not in the flesh; on the contrary, you are in the spirit, if only the Spirit of God dwells in you. Whoever does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. But if Christ is in you, although the body is dead because of sin, the spirit is alive because of righteousness. If the Spirit of the one who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, the one who raised Christ from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also, through his Spirit dwelling in you.

Living according to the flesh can look like trying to carry the entire weight of life alone. We may believe that everything depends on our performance or our ability to manage other people's reactions. Over time, this pressure can leave us feeling spiritually drained, as though our inner life has slowly gone numb.

The gospel story of Lazarus offers a powerful image of restoration. After four days in the tomb, Lazarus hears the voice of Jesus calling him back to life (John 11:43-44):

He cried out in a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out!" The dead man came out, tied hand and foot with burial bands, and his face was wrapped in a cloth. So Jesus said to them, "Untie him and let him go."

Many people in ACDH recovery recognize the feeling of being bound by old patterns—fear of conflict, difficulty trusting others, or the belief that our needs do not matter. These patterns once helped us survive, but they can keep us stuck if they remain unexamined.

The healing process often involves both God and community. Christ calls us toward new life, and supportive relationships help us remove the "burial bands" of old beliefs and behaviors. Through meetings, prayer, and honest conversation, we gradually experience greater freedom.

Living one day at a time becomes a foundation for this transformation. We do not have to solve our entire life story today. Instead, we take one small step toward honesty, trust, and self-compassion.

Jesus continues to call us out of the tomb of old patterns and into the light of His love. As we follow that call, we begin

discovering that the life God offers is stronger than the wounds of the past.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- When have past experiences from your family of origin influenced how you approach the present moment?

- What patterns from earlier in life might feel like "burial bands" that Christ is helping you loosen?

- How are you practicing living one day at a time in your recovery journey today?

MASS READINGS

- FIRST READING** Ezekiel 37:12-14
- RESP. PS.** Psalm 130:1-2, 3-4, 5-6, 7-8
- SECOND READING** Romans 8:8-11
- GOSPEL** John 11:1-45

