

THIRD SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

A new year brings a renewed invitation to reflect on the beginning of our recovery and draws us back to Step One: We admitted we were powerless over addictions, compulsions, and unhealthy attachments—that our lives had become unmanageable. For many of us, that beginning was marked by collapse—the moment we could no longer outrun the truth. What we once used for relief or control had become a source of suffering. Whether it was alcohol, drugs, lust, food, work, gambling, codependency, or some other attachment, we were no longer managing it. It was managing us.

In that moment of clarity, we saw the truth: we were powerless. This realization often feels like defeat, but it is also the beginning of hope. The Big Book of *Alcoholics Anonymous* describes it this way: “We learned that we had to fully concede to our innermost selves that we were alcoholics. This is the first step in recovery” (p. 30). It also reminds us that “Without help it is too much for us. But there is One who has all power—that One is God. May you find Him now!” (p. 59).

The prophet Isaiah gives language to this moment of turning: “The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; upon those who lived in a land of gloom a light has shone” (Isaiah 9:1). That light is Christ. And just as He came into a world of confusion, grief, and chaos, He comes into the disordered parts of our lives to bring light and healing.

This light doesn’t always arrive with fireworks. Often, it begins quietly, in a meeting room or confessional, with a moment of honesty. We speak the truth. We say out loud what we can no longer carry alone. That confession marks a turning point. As the Big Book says, “We stood at the turning point. We asked His protection and care with complete abandon” (*Alcoholics Anonymous*, p. 59).

Recovery is not a solitary journey. At every step, we need others—sponsors, friends in recovery, people who understand. We learn to trust their experience and follow their guidance. They walk with us as we move from despair to hope, from chaos to peace.

This Sunday’s gospel recounts how Jesus called the first disciples. He found them as they were—working, fishing, likely carrying the concerns of daily life—and invited them to something more. “Come after me, and I will make you fishers of men.” They left their nets and followed Him (Matthew 4:19-20).

Step One is our own invitation to leave the nets behind. Not just the substance or behavior, but the whole way of life we built around it. As we begin that journey, we don’t need to have it all figured out. We just need to be honest, willing, and open to God’s direction.

The kingdom of God is not far off. It begins now, one step at a time, one day at a time. When we are honest about our powerlessness, we begin to make space for

a new kind of strength—one that does not come from us, but from God who loves us and is already leading us forward.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- What brought you to the point of admitting powerlessness in your recovery?

- How has honesty with yourself and others helped you make spiritual progress?

- In what ways is God inviting you to leave behind old patterns and follow Him today?

MASS READINGS

FIRST READING Isaiah 8:23-9:3

RESPONSORIAL PSALM Psalm 27:1, 4, 13-14

SECOND READING 1 Corinthians 1:10-13, 17

GOSPEL Matthew 4:12-23