

THIRD SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

A new year invites us to reflect on the beginning of our own healing journey and return to Step One: We admitted we were powerless over addictions, compulsions, and unhealthy attachments—that our lives had become unmanageable. For many family members and loved ones, this moment of truth arrives after years of trying to fix, rescue, control, or hold things together. Despite our best efforts, nothing seemed to change. In fact, the more we tried to manage someone else’s addiction or behavior, the more unmanageable our own lives became.

We often come to recovery exhausted and confused, unsure of where to place the blame—or if there’s any hope for things to get better. But that moment of collapse is not the end. It’s the beginning of something new. It’s where clarity and grace begin to break through. As the Big Book of *Alcoholics Anonymous* puts it, “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). For loved ones, this first step might look like admitting we can’t make someone sober, we can’t force change, and we can’t carry the burden alone.

The spiritual foundation of recovery reminds us, “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!” (*Alcoholics Anonymous*, p. 59). Turning to God is not an act of weakness. It is an act of courage—of choosing to place our trust in something greater than ourselves after seeing that our own methods haven’t worked.

The prophet Isaiah speaks to this turning when he says, “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). As family members, we know the darkness of fear, codependency, and trying to hold everything together. But into that darkness comes the light of Christ, who offers peace and a new direction—not just for the person struggling with addiction, but for us too.

That light often begins with a quiet moment of truth, perhaps in a recovery meeting or during personal prayer, when we admit how much this has hurt and ask for help. That moment becomes 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).

This Sunday’s gospel tells the story of how Jesus called the first disciples. He approached them not in a temple or during a perfect moment, but in the middle of their workday. He said, “Come after me, and I will make you fishers of men.” And they left their nets and followed Him (Matthew 4:19-20).

For us, Step One is its own call to leave behind the nets we’ve clung to—false responsibility, resentment, fear, or the illusion of control. Healing begins when we let go and allow God to lead us. We don’t have to know the full path ahead. We just need a little honesty, a little willingness, and the support of others who have walked this road before us.

The journey of recovery is not about fixing anyone else. It is about being transformed, day by day, by God’s love, mercy, and truth. The light has already begun to shine. And we are not alone.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- What false responsibilities or fears have kept you from admitting your powerlessness?

- How has letting go helped you find peace in your relationships and circumstances?

- What “nets” might God be inviting you to release so you can follow Him more freely?

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