

SIXTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Recovery often begins when the strategies we relied on to get through life finally stop working. Control, image management, and shortcuts may have helped us survive for a time, but they eventually leave us worn down and disconnected. We may have followed rules outwardly while our inner lives remained shaped by fear, resentment, secrecy, or shame. Addiction teaches us to aim for the minimum required to get by, while recovery invites us into something far more honest and demanding: a life of integrity where our inner world and outer actions are brought into alignment.

This Sunday's gospel reading continues Jesus' Sermon on the Mount and deepens what it means to live faithfully. Jesus makes it clear that he has not come to relax God's law but to fulfill it by bringing it into the heart. He speaks directly to the gap many of us know well: the difference between avoiding obvious wrongdoing and allowing God to heal what is broken within us (Matthew 5:17, 21-22):

Jesus said to his disciples: "Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets. I have come not to abolish but to fulfill... You have heard that it was said to your ancestors, You shall not kill; and whoever kills will be liable to judgement. But I say to you, whoever is angry with his brother will be liable to judgement."

Rather than focusing only on external behavior, Jesus names anger, contempt, lust, and dishonesty as places where sin takes root. This teaching can feel uncomfortable, especially for those of us who relied on denial or rationalization to survive addiction. Yet it is also deeply hopeful. Jesus is not interested in catching us failing. He desires to heal us at the source so that our lives can bear good fruit.

This movement from surface compliance to interior honesty mirrors our experience of recovery. Many of us tried for

years to manage our addiction, compulsions, and unhealthy attachments by adjusting behaviors while avoiding the deeper wounds underneath. Transformation begins when we finally admit the truth: that our lives had become unmanageable and that we could not heal ourselves. From there, recovery becomes less about checking boxes and more about allowing God to change us from the inside out.

The second reading reinforces this shift in perspective. Saint Paul reminds us that God's wisdom does not operate according to worldly standards of success or control (1 Corinthians 2:6-7):

Brothers and sisters: We speak a wisdom to those who are mature, not a wisdom of this age nor of the rulers of this age who are passing away. Rather, we speak God's wisdom, mysterious, hidden, which God predetermined before the ages for our glory.

In recovery, we slowly learn that God's wisdom often looks impractical or even foolish to the world. Telling the truth, making amends, asking for help, and surrendering outcomes do not promise quick relief. Yet over time, these practices bring a freedom that no substance or behavior ever could. As the Twelve Steps teach us, we seek through prayer and reflection to know God's will for us and the strength to carry it out, trusting that God is already at work in ways we cannot see.

Jesus' instruction to let our "yes" mean yes and our "no" mean no speaks directly to the spiritual integrity recovery requires. Addiction thrives in half-truths and divided loyalties. Healing begins when we allow our words, actions, and intentions to align. This kind of honesty is rarely perfect or immediate. It is practiced one day at a time, often with humility and the support of others who understand the struggle.

The good news is that Jesus does not ask us to achieve this integrity alone. He meets us in our weakness and invites us into a life rooted in grace rather than performance. As we continue to show up, tell the truth, and trust God with what we uncover, our lives gradually reflect the freedom Jesus promises. Recovery becomes not just abstinence from old behaviors, but a growing capacity to love God and others with an undivided heart.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- How have you begun to close the gap between outward behavior and inner honesty? What has helped you through this?
- How does Jesus' invitation to live from the heart challenge or encourage you in your current season of recovery?
- In what practical ways are you learning to let your "yes" and your "no" reflect greater integrity one day at a time?

MASS READINGS

FIRST READING Sirach 15:15-20

RESP. PS. Psalm 119:1-2, 4-5, 17-18, 33-34

SECOND READING 1 Corinthians 2:6-10

GOSPEL Matthew 5:17-37

