

Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time



Soon after he became the Holy Father, Pope Francis mentioned in an interview that he sees “the Church as a field hospital after battle.” We know from our own personal experiences and global trends on addiction and other issues that we are all wounded and in need of healing. Thus, rather than serving as a dispatcher and handing off the vulnerable, the local church ought to be a beacon of light to families engulfed by darkness and anyone seeking to make difficult changes in their lives.

Showing up to be part of a fellowship helps us grow while providing a place for others to find new life and new perspective. By doing so, we open the doors of the Church to share the saving grace of Jesus Christ. This is not an act that keeps the wonders of Christ focused inward, but rather one that allows our Lord to enter the world for all to be awoken.

This Sunday's Second Reading describes what happens when we gather together to share about God working in our lives. Saint Paul explains:

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,
and which none of the rulers of this age knew.*

When we put our faith in the Lord, our recovery bears rich fruit and offers freedom from the family disease of addiction. This is a dramatic change from our priorities when the addiction or alcoholism was making decisions for our families. Through humble prayer and a desperate willingness to let God make all things new, we stopped playing the director and relinquished control to our Creator.

Some of us may have grown up with a faith full of duties and checklists that was void of love and self-sacrifice. Matthew's Gospel, which we will read throughout this liturgical year, paints Jesus as the new Moses whose mission is not to destroy Jewish Law but to ground it more firmly in a heartfelt, loving relationship between us and God. As we get into the depths of our recovery, we find a similar transition taking place. Our spiritual progress relies on improved, authentic relationships with the body of Christ, which often demands more than just checking boxes.

From a human perspective, dutifully checking off boxes seems like a much easier and softer way to get on God's good side than approaching a neighbor or relative we've been feuding with. Thankfully, the Twelve Steps move us into a deeper relationship with God and others while providing a framework to live with integrity.

Jesus notes that a simple way to maintain loving relationships with others is to, "Let your 'Yes' mean 'Yes,' and your 'No' mean 'No.'" Too often, we abandon the truth and shrink ourselves in front of others while losing our sense of self. This can be especially true of family members affected by addiction. As a result of our recovery, we gain freedom and renewed trust in God that makes surrender come a little bit easier.

By authentically sharing our experience, strength, and hope with others in meetings and elsewhere, we join the important movement to help our Church develop a "field hospital" mentality where the wounded are welcomed and offered healing. Our solution rests in Jesus Christ and the outpouring of love he makes available every day.

Reflection Questions

- What kind of *field hospital* experiences have you had at your local church when you felt a sense of healing and hospitality?
- Describe a moment in your recovery journey when you fully surrendered to the will of God.
- How do you interpret Jesus' declaration to let your 'yes' mean 'yes' and your 'no' mean 'no'?

40 Meetings in 40 Days Challenge

- ▽ The 40 Meetings in 40 Days Challenge is an invitation to grow closer to Jesus Christ and renew your commitment to recovery this Lent.
- ▽ Commit to attending a recovery meeting every day for 40 days and engage daily spiritual routines.
- ▽ Challenge begins on Ash Wednesday, February 22.
- ▽ Find more info and register at **catholicinrecovery.com/40daychallenge**

Sunday Mass Readings this Week

First Reading: Sirach 15:15-20

Responsorial Psalm: Ps 119:1-2, 4-5, 17-18, 33-34

Second Reading: 1 Corinthians 2:6-10

Gospel: Matthew 5:17-37