

THIRTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

There comes a point in recovery when we realize that change will require more than good intentions. We may have experienced moments of clarity or even a strong desire to live differently, but something deeper is needed. Recovery asks us not only to see the problem, but to surrender our way of living and begin again on new terms.

Saint Paul offers a powerful image for this transformation in this Sunday's second reading (Romans 6:3-11):

Are you unaware that we who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were indeed buried with him through baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might live in newness of life.

Baptism is not simply something that happened in the past. It represents an ongoing invitation to let go of the old way of life and step into something new.

In recovery, this movement closely mirrors Step One. We come to admit that we are powerless over our addiction, compulsion, or unhealthy attachment, and that our lives have become unmanageable. This admission is not just about behavior. It reaches deeper into how we have tried to control, manage, and direct our lives according to our own will.

For many of us, this realization does not come easily. We may have spent years trying to convince ourselves that things were under control or that we could fix the problem on our own. Even when the consequences became clear, we may have continued to rely on our own thinking. Step One interrupts that pattern. It brings us to a place of honesty where we can no longer deny reality.

This moment can feel like a kind of loss. Letting go of control can feel uncertain and uncomfortable. Yet this is where new life

begins. When we stop trying to manage everything ourselves, we create space for God to act. What once felt like defeat becomes the starting point of transformation.

Saint Paul continues, "*We know that Christ, raised from the dead, dies no more; death no longer has power over him.*" This is the hope at the center of recovery. The patterns that once dominated our lives do not have the final word. Through Christ, something new is possible.

The Gospel also speaks to this turning point in a different way (Matthew 10:37-42). Jesus tells His disciples that following Him requires placing Him above everything else. This is not a call to reject others, but an invitation to reorder our priorities. As we pursue a new way of life, this often means recognizing that we cannot hold on to both our old way of living and our desire for freedom. Something must change.

In practical terms, this change unfolds in simple but meaningful ways. We begin by telling the truth about our situation. We reach out to others instead of isolating. We become willing to follow guidance rather than relying only on our own understanding. These actions may seem small, but they represent a fundamental shift.

This process also invites humility. We begin to accept that we do not have all the answers and that we need help. This can be challenging, especially if we are used to relying on ourselves. Yet it is through this humility that we begin to grow.

Recovery is not about getting everything right. It is about moving in a new direction. We may still struggle, but we no longer have to stay stuck. Each day offers another opportunity to practice surrender and to take a step forward.

As we continue this journey, we are reminded that new life is not something we create on our own. It is something we receive. When we are willing to let go of the old way and trust God with what comes next, we begin to experience the freedom that once felt out of reach.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- When have you experienced the kind of surrender described in Step One, and what made it difficult or possible in that moment?

- How do you recognize the "old way of living" showing up in your thoughts, decisions, or behaviors today?

- What does it look like for you, in a practical way, to live in the "newness of life" that God is offering right now?

MASS READINGS

FIRST READING 2 Kings 4:8-11, 14-16a

RESP. PS. Psalm 89:2-3, 16-17, 18-19

SECOND READING Romans 6:3-4, 8-11

GOSPEL Matthew 10:37-42