



FOURTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Many of us enter recovery with a strong desire to change and an equally strong belief that we can figure it out if we just try hard enough. We bring plans, strategies, and determination, hoping that this time will be different. Yet over time, we begin to discover something surprising: lasting recovery is not built on our ability to manage everything, but on our willingness to surrender.

This shift can feel uncomfortable. For years, we relied on our own thinking and willpower to navigate life. Even when those efforts failed, we often doubled down, convinced that more effort or better planning would eventually produce different results. Recovery challenges this mindset at its core. It invites us to consider that the problem is not simply what we have been doing, but how we have been trying to do it.

This Sunday's gospel offers a direct invitation into this new way of living. Jesus says (Matthew 11:28–30):

“Come to me, all you who labor and are burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am meek and humble of heart; and you will find rest for yourselves. For my yoke is easy, and my burden light.”

These words speak directly to the experience of addiction and recovery. Many of us know what it means to feel burdened by compulsions, consequences, shame, and the exhausting effort of trying to hold life together.

At first glance, taking on a “yoke” may not sound appealing. A yoke suggests work, responsibility, and commitment. Yet the difference is found in who carries the weight. When we

rely only on ourselves, the burden becomes overwhelming. When we walk with Christ, something changes. The weight is shared. The struggle is no longer isolated. We are no longer alone in the effort.

This reflects the heart of Steps One, Two, and Three. We admit that we are powerless, come to believe that God can restore us, and make a decision to turn our will and our lives over to His care. These steps are not passive. They require honesty, willingness, and action. But they are grounded in a fundamental shift—we stop trying to run the show and begin to trust God to lead.

This kind of surrender is not a one-time decision. It is a daily practice. We may find ourselves picking the burden back up, trying to control outcomes, fix situations, or manage other people. When this happens, we are invited to return again to the simple posture of surrender. We ask for help. We listen. We take the next right step rather than trying to solve everything at once.

Recovery reminds us that we are not meant to carry this alone. Walking with others—sponsors, friends, and fellowship—helps lighten the burden even further. We begin to experience that we do not have to rely solely on our own strength or understanding. There is wisdom, support, and grace available when we remain connected.

Over time, something begins to change within us. The constant tension of trying to control everything softens. We become more receptive, more patient, and more open to grace. Problems do not disappear, but our relationship to

them changes. We begin to trust that God is at work even when we do not fully understand the path ahead.

Jesus does not promise a life without effort. He promises a different kind of effort—one rooted in relationship, trust, and grace. As we continue in recovery, we are invited to accept this offer again and again. We bring our burdens, our questions, and our limitations to Him, trusting that He will provide the rest we cannot create on our own.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- Where do you notice yourself still trying to manage or control outcomes rather than surrendering them to God?
- What does it look like for you to take on Christ's “yoke” in a practical way in your recovery today?
- How has connection with others helped lighten the burdens you once tried to carry alone?

MASS READINGS

FIRST READING Zechariah 9:9–10

RESP. PS. Psalm 145:1–2, 8–9, 10–11, 13–14

SECOND READING Romans 8:9, 11–13

GOSPEL Matthew 11:25–30