

FIFTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Recovery as adult children of dysfunctional homes begins with recognition. We start to see how old roles, survival strategies, and family patterns still shape our lives. Yet awareness alone does not always bring change. We may understand why we people-please, withdraw, over-function, or fear conflict, but still find ourselves reacting in familiar ways. Recovery asks us to cultivate the inner conditions where a new way of living can take root.

This Sunday's gospel offers a meaningful image through the parable of the sower (Matthew 13:1-23). Jesus describes seed falling on different kinds of ground. Some falls on the path and is taken away. Some falls on rocky ground, where it grows quickly but has no roots. Some falls among thorns and is choked. Some falls on rich soil and bears fruit.

In adult child recovery, we recognize these soils in our own experience. At times, truth cannot enter because our defenses are strong. At other times, we feel hopeful after a meeting or conversation, but the growth feels fragile when conflict, criticism, silence, or disappointment awakens old fears. The thorns might include shame, perfectionism, control, self-doubt, fear of abandonment, or the belief that another person's emotions are our responsibility.

The parable invites us to ask what kind of soil we are cultivating within. ACA wisdom speaks of reparenting, becoming our own loving parent, and learning to live from our true self rather than old survival roles. This work is not about blaming our families or denying what happened. It is about recognizing what shaped us and becoming willing to live differently now.

The Twelve Steps support this growth. Step One helps us admit that old coping strategies have become unmanageable. Steps Two and Three invite us to trust God and become open to guidance beyond our own fear-based reactions. Steps Four through Nine help us name resentments, grief, harms, and patterns that keep us bound. Steps Ten, Eleven, and Twelve help us practice awareness, prayer, and healthier connection each day.

This process requires slowing down, which may feel unfamiliar if we learned to survive by staying alert, moving quickly, or reading the room. We learn to pause before reacting and ask what is happening inside us. Is this response rooted in the present, or is it connected to an old role? Are we trying to earn love, avoid rejection, manage tension, or disappear? These questions help us create space between old instincts and new choices. They also help us treat ourselves with compassion rather than contempt when growth feels slow.

Fellowship matters because safe relationships help soften the soil and challenge the belief that we must heal alone. In meetings, we practice being honest without performing. We hear others name patterns we thought were ours alone. We begin to receive support without immediately minimizing our needs or taking care of everyone else. This becomes part of learning to belong without performing, explaining, or earning our place.

Over time, fruit begins to appear, sometimes in small but significant shifts. We become more present, more honest, and more capable of boundaries. We feel less driven to fix, please,

or disappear. We begin to trust that our needs matter and that God is forming a steadier identity within us.

The parable of the sower reminds us that growth takes care, patience, and the right conditions. As we continue in recovery, we are invited to tend the soil of our inner life, trusting that God can bring lasting fruit where old patterns once seemed to have the final word.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- Where do you notice old beliefs or patterns preventing growth in your life today?
- What helps you create a sense of safety and openness within yourself?
- How are you learning to respond differently instead of reacting from past roles?

MASS READINGS

FIRST READING Isaiah 55:10-11

RESP. PS. Psalm 65:10, 11, 12-13, 14

SECOND READING Romans 8:18-23

GOSPEL Matthew 13:1-23