

# ELEVENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

As we move into Ordinary Time, the Church invites us to reflect on what it means to live out the new life we have received. The intensity of Easter and Pentecost gives way to the steady, daily work of discipleship. In recovery from dysfunctional family systems, this shift is familiar. Insight and awareness are important, but lasting change comes through consistent daily practice of new behaviors, boundaries, and ways of relating.

The readings this Sunday speak clearly about identity and mission. In the first reading, God reminds the people of Israel of what He has already done: *“I bore you up on eagle wings and brought you here to myself”* (Exodus 19:4-6). Their identity begins as a gift. They belong to Him. The invitation to live in covenant is a response to that belonging, not a condition for it.

This is an important starting point in ACDH recovery. Many of us developed our identity in environments marked by instability, inconsistency, or emotional neglect. We may have learned to define ourselves through roles such as caretaker, peacemaker, or performer. These roles may have helped us survive, but they often left us disconnected from our true selves. Recovery begins to shift that. We come to see that our identity is not rooted in what we do for others, but in who we are as beloved children of God.

From that identity comes direction. Step Three invites us to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God. For many, this means learning to trust something outside of ourselves. It also means recognizing when we are trying to control

outcomes or manage others in order to feel safe. This is a daily practice of surrender, awareness, and intentional choice.

The responsorial psalm reminds us: *“We are his people: the sheep of his flock”* (Psalm 100). Connection is essential. Many of us learned to rely only on ourselves or to remain guarded in relationships. In recovery, we begin to experience safe connection through meetings and fellowship. Being in “the middle of the herd” helps us learn new ways of relating, including listening, sharing honestly, and receiving support.

Steps Four through Nine invite deeper healing. We begin to identify patterns formed in early life, including fear, people-pleasing, perfectionism, or emotional withdrawal. We take responsibility where appropriate and begin to make changes. The second reading reminds us of the foundation for this work: *“God proves his love for us in that while we were still sinners Christ died for us”* (Romans 5:8). We are not required to earn love. We are invited to receive it.

The gospel offers a powerful image: *“His heart was moved with pity for them because they were troubled and abandoned, like sheep without a shepherd”* (Matthew 9:36). This can resonate deeply. Many of us know what it is like to feel unseen, unsupported, or alone. Jesus responds with compassion and invites His followers to bring healing and hope.

This shapes our mission. As we grow, we begin to show up differently in relationships. We become more honest, more present, and more grounded. We learn to respond instead of react. Our healing becomes a quiet invitation for others to begin their own journey.

Recovery is lived one day at a time. We remain grounded in our identity, stay connected to the fellowship, continue the work of healing, and remain open to growth and service. In doing so, we participate in the ongoing work of God in our lives and in the lives of those around us.

## REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- How have early family roles or patterns shaped your sense of identity, and how is that changing?  
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- When do you notice yourself returning to old patterns, and what helps you respond differently?  
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- How has connection with others supported your growth in honesty and emotional health?  
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## MASS READINGS

**FIRST READING** Exodus 19:2-6a

**RESP. PS.** Psalm 100:1-2, 3, 5

**SECOND READING** Romans 5:6-11

**GOSPEL** Matthew 9:36-10:8