

# 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 12-step recovery for family members and loved ones, this shift is familiar. Moments of clarity, hope, or even relief may come, but lasting peace is formed through consistent daily practice of surrender, healthy boundaries, and trust in God.

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 *“hearken to my voice and keep my covenant”* is not a condition for being loved, but a response to it. It is a way of living into the relationship they have already been given.

This is an important starting point in family recovery. Many of us came in with a distorted sense of identity. We may have defined ourselves by another person’s behavior, their struggles, or their progress. We may have felt responsible for fixing, managing, or protecting them. Fear, anxiety, and resentment often shaped how we saw ourselves and our role. Recovery begins to change that. We come to see that our identity is not dependent on someone else’s choices. We are 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. In family recovery, this often means letting go of control. It means entrusting our loved ones to God while taking responsibility

for our own actions, thoughts, and well-being. This is not a one-time decision. It is a daily practice supported by prayer, meetings, and honest relationships.

The responsorial psalm reinforces this truth: *“We are his people: the sheep of his flock”* (Psalm 100). Staying connected to a healthy fellowship is essential. Isolation often intensified our fear and confusion. In community, we find support, clarity, and encouragement. We begin to learn from others who have walked a similar path and discover that we are not alone.

Steps Four through Nine invite us into deeper healing. We begin to examine our own patterns, including control, resentment, enabling, or avoidance. We take responsibility for our part and seek healing where possible. 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 asked to earn love or fix everything. We are invited to respond to a love that has already been given.

The gospel reveals how Jesus sees those who are struggling: *“His heart was moved with pity for them because they were troubled and abandoned, like sheep without a shepherd”* (Matthew 9:36). Many of us have felt that same helplessness, either in ourselves or as we watched someone we love suffer. Jesus responds not with control or urgency, but with compassion.

He then sends His disciples out with a mission to bring healing and hope. This shapes our role in recovery. We are not called to rescue or change others, but to live with

honesty, compassion, and trust in God. As we grow, we begin to respond differently. We set boundaries, speak truth with love, and allow others the dignity of their own journey.

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

## REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- When have you found your identity tied to another person’s behavior, and how is that changing in recovery?
- What does turning your will and your life over to God look like in your current relationships?
- How are you being invited to practice compassion without taking on responsibility that is not yours?

## 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