

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 lust addiction and sexual compulsions, this shift is especially important. Moments of clarity, strong resolutions, and even spiritual breakthroughs are meaningful, but lasting freedom is formed through consistent daily practices of honesty, surrender, and accountability.

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 truth is essential in lust addiction recovery. Many of us developed a distorted sense of identity shaped by secrecy, shame, and objectification. We may have come to believe that we were defined by compulsive behavior or by desires that felt impossible to control. Recovery begins to reshape that identity. We come to see that we are not defined by lust, but by our dignity 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. In this area of recovery, that often means surrendering not only behaviors, but also patterns of thinking and attention. It means choosing honesty over secrecy and connection over

isolation. This is a daily practice supported by structure, prayer, and fellowship.

The responsorial psalm reinforces this truth: *“We are his people: the sheep of his flock”* (Psalm 100). Lust thrives in isolation, secrecy, and self-reliance. Recovery grows in connection. Staying “in the middle of the herd” means remaining close to meetings, sponsors, and trusted companions, especially when temptation is strong or subtle rationalizations begin to appear.

Steps Four through Nine invite deeper healing. We examine resentments, fears, and patterns of selfishness that have shaped our behavior. We take responsibility and begin to repair harm where possible. In this Sunday’s second reading, Saint Paul 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 working toward being worthy of love. We are responding to a love already given.

The gospel offers a powerful image of 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 who struggle with lust addiction know this experience of feeling disconnected, restless, or alone. Jesus responds not with rejection, but with compassion.

He then sends His disciples out to bring healing and hope. As we begin to experience freedom, we are invited to share honestly with others. This may take the form of sponsorship, accountability, or simply being willing to speak truth in a

meeting. We do not offer perfection. We offer experience, strength, and hope.

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 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 secrecy or shame shaped your sense of identity, and how is that being transformed?
- What specific practices help you stay connected and grounded when temptation arises?
- How might your honesty and experience become a source of hope for someone else?

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