

CIR IS MEMBER-SUPPORTED, MISSION-DRIVEN

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CIR Website

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Venmo

CIR ANNOUNCEMENTS

UPCOMING 2027 CIR RETREATS — SAVE THE DATES!

CIR retreats create space to step away from daily distractions, deepen your relationship with God, and experience recovery through prayer, fellowship, the Twelve Steps, and the sacramental life of the Church.

DELRAY BEACH, FL January 30–31

St. Vincent Ferrer Catholic Church

TRAPPIST, KY March 12–14

Abbey of Gethsemani

MALVERN, PA April 9–11

Malvern Retreat House

ONTARIO, CANADA July 23–25

Queen of the Apostles Renewal Centre

Scan the QR code or visit catholicinrecovery.com/events to learn more.



MASS READINGS

FIRST READING Exodus 22:20–26

RESP. PS. Psalm 18:2–3, 3–4, 47, 51

SECOND READING 1 Thessalonians 1:5c–10

GOSPEL Matthew 22:34–40



CIR WEEKLY MEETING REFLECTION
GENERAL RECOVERY

THIRTIETH SUNDAY IN IN ORDINARY TIME

One of the clearest signs that recovery is changing us appears in our relationships. We begin noticing how our choices affect other people. An apology becomes easier to offer. We become less interested in defending ourselves and more willing to repair what we have damaged. The freedom we receive slowly makes us more capable of love.

In Sunday's gospel, a scholar of the law asks Jesus which commandment is greatest (Matthew 22:34–40). Jesus answers, "*You shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.*" Then He adds, "*You shall love your neighbor as yourself.*" Everything else, He says, depends on these two commandments.

Recovery helps put these loves back in the right order. Addiction narrows life around what we want or believe we need in the moment. Saint Paul describes the opposite movement in the second reading when he praises the Thessalonians because they "*turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God*" (1 Thessalonians 1:9). Recovery asks for that same turning. What once demanded our attention begins to lose its place, and we become more available to God and to the people around us.

Steps Eight and Nine give this change a concrete form. Step Eight is sometimes reduced to making a list of people

we have harmed, but the deeper work is becoming willing to see those people differently. We bring them to prayer. We ask God to soften what has become hardened in us and to help us recognize them again as our neighbor. Some may have harmed us too. That does not erase what happened or require us to ignore necessary boundaries. It does ask us to become willing to release the version of them that exists only inside our resentment.

That conversion of heart prepares us for Step Nine. Amends are more than a way to relieve guilt or clean up the past. They are an expression of love and responsibility. We acknowledge the harm we caused without demanding forgiveness or controlling how the other person responds. Where direct amends would cause further injury, wisdom and guidance help us find another way to practice honesty and repair.

The first reading reminds us that love is not sentimental. God commands Israel not to mistreat the stranger or take advantage of the vulnerable (Exodus 22:20–26). Love becomes visible in the way we treat people, especially when there is nothing to gain from doing so. Recovery gradually moves us from self-protection toward greater concern for others.

Step Ten keeps the work current by asking us to continue taking personal inventory and promptly admit when we are wrong. Instead of allowing resentment or dishonesty to accumulate, we become quicker to return to the truth. Over time, this practice helps love become less dependent on mood and more rooted in character.

Jesus does not separate love of God from love of neighbor, and He does not ask us to love our neighbor

while despising ourselves. Recovery teaches us to take responsibility without making shame our identity. As we receive God’s mercy more deeply, we become more capable of extending mercy without abandoning truth.

The goal of recovery is larger than stopping an addictive behavior. God is restoring our capacity to love. We turn away from what once claimed our loyalty and become more available to Him. We begin repairing what we can and allowing prayer to change the way we see the people connected to our past. Over time, the commandments Jesus gives in Sunday’s gospel become less like ideals we admire and more like a way of life we are learning to practice.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

■ Who is difficult for you to see as your neighbor right now, especially when resentment or past harm is involved?

■ How has working Steps Eight, Nine, or Ten changed the way you relate to God, yourself, or other people?

■ What has helped soften your heart toward someone you have harmed or someone with whom the relationship has been complicated?
