

Seventeenth Sunday in Ordinary Time



The Twelve Steps of recovery offer a powerful spiritual path—not only for those suffering from addiction, but also for family members and loved ones who’ve been affected by the disease in deep, often hidden ways. For us, recovery is not about controlling someone else’s journey. Instead, it’s about discovering how God wants to heal and transform us. The spiritual awakening that comes from this process changes the way we relate to our loved ones, to ourselves, and to God. As we grow in trust, we discover that the Holy Spirit has been present all along, even in the pain.

This Sunday’s second reading from Saint Paul’s Letter to the Colossians captures this mystery beautifully (Colossians 2:12–13):

*Brothers and sisters:
You were buried with him in baptism,
in which you were also raised with him
through faith in the power of God,
who raised him from the dead.
And even when you were dead
in transgressions and the uncircumcision of your
flesh,
he brought you to life along with him,
having forgiven us all our transgressions.*

Many of us have felt dead inside—paralyzed by worry, bitterness, or fear over what might happen to our loved one. We may have spent years trying to fix them, manage their chaos, or hold the family together. When that doesn’t work, we often turn inward, feeling ashamed, angry, or hopeless. Recovery helps us see that we are not powerless victims but beloved children of God, called to live with dignity and trust. In surrendering what we cannot control, we are raised with Christ and made new.

The Twelve Steps offer this resurrection in practical terms. We admit our powerlessness, turn our will over to God, take personal inventory, and make amends. As we do, our internal world changes. We begin to forgive ourselves for the roles we’ve played, and we begin to forgive our loved one—not because they’ve necessarily changed, but because we no longer want to carry the burden of resentment.

Jesus gives us the perfect model of prayer in this Sunday’s Gospel. The Lord’s Prayer is not a checklist or a bargaining tool. It is an invitation to align ourselves with the heart of the Father. In teaching His disciples, Jesus says (Luke 11:9–12):

*“And I tell you, ask and you will receive;
seek and you will find;
knock and the door will be opened to you.
For everyone who asks, receives;
and the one who seeks, finds;
and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened.
What father among you would hand his son a snake
when he asks for a fish?
Or hand him a scorpion when he asks for an egg?”*

This reassurance from Jesus reminds us that God is not waiting for us to get it all right. He longs to give us good things. But we must be willing to ask. In recovery, we learn to pray honestly and humbly—not demanding outcomes, but seeking grace.

We also begin to realize that the “daily bread” we ask for is more than physical provision. It’s the spiritual nourishment we receive through prayer, community, and the Eucharist. The more we place our trust in God, the less we fear what the future holds.

Forgiveness is central to our healing. In the Steps, we take moral inventory and admit our shortcomings—not so we can feel ashamed, but so we can be free. We then make amends where possible, including to ourselves. These acts of courage open the door to healing relationships that were once full of fear or dysfunction.

There will still be hard days. We will still grieve what addiction has cost our families. But with God’s grace, we learn to live in peace, trusting that He is at work in ways we may not always see. And as we are transformed, we can extend that hope to others walking a similar road.

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- How have you experienced new life in your own recovery, even if your loved one is still struggling?
- What line of the Lord’s Prayer speaks most to your current season of life?
- How can you bring the spirit of forgiveness into your relationships—starting with yourself?

From Recovery to Wholeness Webinar

*Discover practical ways to heal and thrive
in every aspect of life in recovery*

- Participate live on **Thursday, July 31 at 6p ET/3p PT**
- Jackie Mulligan and Dr. Bridget Vander Woude of Reform Wellness will share how things like sleep, play, nutrition, and functional movement can support recovery
- Free for CIR+ members otherwise \$10 to register
- This and all webinar recordings available on CIR+
- For more info and to register for the webinar visit **catholicinrecovery.com/webinars**

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First Reading: Genesis 18:20-32

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 138:1-2, 2-3, 6-7, 7-8

Second Reading: Colossians 2:12-14

Gospel: Luke 11:1-13