

Seventeenth Sunday in Ordinary Time



The Twelve Steps are more than a formula for sobriety—they offer a path to freedom, integrity, and spiritual awakening. For those of us recovering from lust addiction, they help us see ourselves and others with new eyes. Lust distorted our view of love and intimacy. It turned people into objects and isolated us in shame. But as we surrender, seek God, and work the Steps, we discover something that was always present but often ignored: the presence of the Holy Spirit working within us.

Saint Paul describes this transformation in his letter to the Colossians, read this Sunday (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 known what it means to feel spiritually dead—numb, empty, or trapped in cycles of sin. We tried to stop. We made promises. We told ourselves we'd never go back. But lust is cunning, baffling, and powerful. It offered temporary relief at the cost of long-term peace. The good news of recovery—and of the Gospel—is that we are never beyond the reach of resurrection. In Christ, we are not just forgiven—we are brought to life.

But that life doesn't come automatically. The Twelve Steps walk us through a process: admitting our powerlessness, turning to a Higher Power, making a searching moral inventory, and making amends. In recovery, we learn to stop fighting lust alone and instead invite God into our desires, fears, and wounds.

This transformation is supported by prayer—especially the kind of prayer Jesus teaches in today's Gospel. The Lord's Prayer orients us not toward control, but toward surrender. It begins not with our demands, but with God's name. Jesus reminds us (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?”*

Our addiction convinced us that we were unlovable, unworthy, or too broken to be healed. But Jesus wants us to trust in God as a loving Father. When we ask for healing, He does not give us shame. When we seek intimacy with Him, He does not condemn us. He offers us Himself.

The Lord's Prayer also speaks to our daily dependence on grace: "Give us this day our daily bread." For those recovering from lust, that might mean strength to avoid a temptation, courage to reach out to a sponsor, or grace to face a difficult conversation. The Body and Blood of Christ are our true nourishment, restoring our hearts and reshaping our desires.

The prayer also calls us into forgiveness—a powerful theme in both the Twelve Steps and Christian life. Step Nine invites us to make amends. This requires humility, courage, and honesty. It's not about erasing the past but allowing God to redeem it. We can't undo the harm we've done, but we can become people of integrity who no longer hide from the truth.

There's no shortcut to spiritual growth, but there is a simple promise: if we ask, seek, and knock, God will respond. He will bring us out of isolation and into communion—with Himself and others. As we walk in that grace, we become witnesses to His healing power.

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- What spiritual routines, prayers, or exercises help you order your life around God?
- How has your understanding of God as a loving Father changed over time?
- What part of the Lord's Prayer speaks most directly to your need for healing today?

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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