

Eighteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time



“Vanity of vanities!... All things are vanity!” (Ecclesiastes 1:2). These sobering words open this Sunday’s Liturgy of the Word and draw our attention to the spiritual journey of detachment from things that cannot satisfy. This message resonates with the experience of family members affected by addiction. For many of us, our lives became ordered around someone else’s behavior—desperate for change, we poured our energy into fixing, managing, or rescuing. But eventually, we discovered that these efforts were in vain.

The Twelve Steps offer a path out of this cycle. By recognizing our powerlessness and turning to God, we begin to release our grip on things we were never meant to control. We stop idolizing outcomes and learn to live one day at a time, rooted in faith. This journey can be slow and painful at first, but with perseverance, it brings deep and lasting peace.

A phrase often heard in recovery fellowships is “don’t leave before the miracle happens.” For family members, the miracle may not be our loved one’s sobriety—it may be our own transformation. We begin to detach with love, set boundaries, and live with serenity regardless of another’s choices. When we place our trust in God instead of our fears, our priorities begin to shift.

In this Sunday’s second reading, Saint Paul calls us to seek what is above, not what is earthly. He writes (Colossians 3:5, 9–10):

*Put to death, then, the parts of you that are earthly:
immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire,
and the greed that is idolatry.
Stop lying to one another,
since you have taken off the old self with its practices
and have put on the new self,
which is being renewed, for knowledge,
in the image of its creator.*

For many of us, the “old self” was obsessed with control, shame, or people-pleasing. Our emotional survival depended on trying to manage everything and everyone. Recovery invites us to lay those burdens down and become renewed in the image of our Creator.

Idolatry, in this context, is not merely the worship of material things but the elevation of anything above God—including our loved one's behavior or our own self-image. Saint Thomas Aquinas warns that even once addiction or crisis is removed, we can become overly attached to things like power, pleasure, honor, and wealth. These too are fleeting.

Another phrase sometimes heard in recovery is “don't leave *after* the miracle happens.” Once we've experienced peace, it can be tempting to drift. But the spiritual disciplines that brought us freedom—prayer, meetings, step work—must remain central. Our new self must be continually renewed in God's love.

Ultimately, we find that the greatest gift is not the change in our loved one or our circumstances, but the change in us. We find fulfillment not in getting what we want but in surrendering to the One who knows our true needs.

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- What attachments or expectations have you had to let go of in your recovery?
- In what ways have you experienced the miracle of inner transformation?
- How do you stay spiritually grounded after the initial relief or change has taken place?

Virtual Recovery Summit in September

*A Day of Hope and Healing:
A Catholic Response to Addiction*

- Save the date for **Friday, September 26, 2025**
- CIR is partnering with iTHIRST Initiative to host a full day full of testimonies, recovery meetings, live music, workshops, keynote speakers, prayer, and more
- Stay tuned for updates over the next several weeks with more information and how to register
- More information TBA and will be updated online at **catholicinrecovery.com/2025-summit**

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First Reading: Ecclesiastes 1:2; 2:21-23

Responsorial Psalm: Ps 90:3-4, 5-6, 12-13, 14 & 17

Second Reading: Colossians 3:1-5, 9-11

Gospel: Luke 12:13-21