

Nineteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time



Saint John Henry Newman once observed that faith is “the reasoning of a mind preoccupied with God.” For those of us who grew up in dysfunctional or chaotic households, our minds were often preoccupied with something very different—survival. We may have lived in constant anticipation of the next crisis, consumed with how to please others, avoid conflict, or stay invisible. We developed strategies to protect ourselves, but in doing so, we often lost touch with our true selves and with God.

Recovery invites us to relearn trust—first in God, then in others, and ultimately in ourselves. This doesn’t happen overnight. Many of us carry deeply ingrained fears of abandonment, rejection, or failure. But over time, through the Twelve Steps and the grace offered through our Catholic faith, we begin to believe that God really is good, and that we are worthy of His love.

This Sunday’s second reading from Hebrews gives voice to that kind of faith (Hebrews 11:1): “Faith is the realization of what is hoped for and evidence of things not seen.”

For adult children, this can feel radical. We may have grown up in environments where hope was dangerous or unrealistic. We learned not to trust what we couldn’t control. But now we are being asked to place our trust in a God we cannot see, and to believe that healing is possible—something we never thought would apply to us.

Saint Paul continues by sharing the stories of faithful people like Abraham who, though they didn’t fully receive what was promised, trusted God’s plan (Hebrews 11:13–16):

*They did not receive what had been promised
but saw it and greeted it from afar
and acknowledged themselves to be strangers and
aliens on earth,
for those who speak thus show that they are seeking
a homeland.
If they had been thinking of the land from which
they had come,
they would have had opportunity to return.
But now they desire a better homeland, a heavenly
one.
Therefore, God is not ashamed to be called their
God,
for he has prepared a city for them.*

This longing for a better homeland speaks to the ache many of us carry. We long for a family that feels safe, a home that is rooted in love and truth. And while we may never receive that perfectly in this world, God promises something more enduring: a new way of being. In recovery, we begin to create new internal “homes” where truth, compassion, and spiritual security can reside.

That doesn't mean we won't be tempted to return to old thinking. The fear of not being enough, the tendency to isolate, the desire to control—all of these may resurface. But we now have tools. Through prayer, inventory, honest sharing, and spiritual direction, we recognize when we are being pulled back into the mindset of fear. And we turn again toward faith.

Living by faith doesn't mean always knowing what God's will is. Sometimes we're simply called to take the next right step, even when we're unsure where it leads. We don't have to figure it all out. We just have to stay willing. As we do, we grow in confidence that God is working within us, and that we're no longer bound by the dysfunction that shaped our early years.

Thomas Merton's prayer beautifully captures the heart of recovery and spiritual surrender:

"My Lord God, I have no idea where I am going. I do not see the road ahead of me. I cannot know for certain where it will end, nor do I really know myself, and the fact that I think I am following your will does not mean that I am actually doing so. But I believe that the desire to please you does in fact please you. And I hope I have that desire in all that I am doing. I hope that I will never do anything apart from that desire. And I know that if I do this you will lead me by the right road, though I may know nothing about it. Therefore will I trust you always though I may seem to be lost and in the shadow of death. I will not fear, for you are ever with me, and you will never leave me to face my perils alone."

FYZW]cb Ei Yg]cbg

- What fears or doubts still hold you back from trusting God with your healing?
- In what ways have you begun to build a "new self" through recovery?
- How does the idea of a "better homeland" give you hope as you continue your journey?

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First Reading: Wisdom 18:6-9

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 33:1, 12, 18-19, 20-22

Second Reading: Hebrews 11:1-2, 8-19

Gospel: Luke 12:32-48