

Nineteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time



Saint John Henry Newman once wrote that “faith is the reasoning of a mind preoccupied with God.” For family members affected by addiction, this kind of faith often grows not in comfort, but through crisis. When addiction touches our homes, our hearts, and our hopes, we begin to realize how powerless we are. We cannot save or fix the person we love. Yet, in that surrender, something beautiful begins to take root: trust. Slowly, we start to reorder our lives around God—not around fear, worry, or control.

In this Sunday’s second reading, Saint Paul offers one of Scripture’s greatest definitions of faith: “Faith is the realization of what is hoped for and evidence of things not seen.” (Hebrews 11:1).

Paul continues by recalling examples of faith, like Abraham’s willingness to offer up his son Isaac—men and women who followed God’s voice, even without certainty of the outcome. They did not receive what had been promised in full, yet they remained faithful (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.*

These words can bring deep comfort to us. In recovery, we also walk a path of faith. We may still carry heartache, regret, or uncertainty. We don’t know what tomorrow holds for our loved ones or our families. But we have glimpsed the peace of surrender and the goodness of God—and we have no desire to return to the exhausting chaos of trying to control what we cannot.

The Twelve Steps help us reframe our lives. We learn that our peace does not depend on someone else's behavior. As we trust God more, we become more stable, more serene. Faith does not leave us passive. Rather, it calls us to loving action: setting boundaries, seeking support, praying consistently, and growing in spiritual maturity.

We may not always be sure of what God's will is, but over time, we become clearer about what it is *not*. It is not manipulation, shame, or fear. It is love, surrender, and presence. We begin to see that what we desire is not just a sober loved one—but a deeper connection to God, and a life filled with purpose and peace.

Thomas Merton, a Trappist monk and spiritual writer, expressed the journey of faith with profound honesty. His prayer is one that many in recovery come to adopt, especially when life feels uncertain:

“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.”

Reflection Questions

- How has your experience with addiction in your family helped you grow in faith or surrender?
- In what ways are you reordering your life around God rather than the behavior of your loved one?
- What part of the Merton prayer speaks most directly to your journey today?

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Sunday Mass Readings this Week

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