

Twenty-third Sunday in Ordinary Time



Suffering is familiar to those of us who grew up in dysfunctional homes. Much of it came from unmet expectations—hoping our parents or caregivers would act differently than they did. When they fell short, we coped by withdrawing, overachieving, people-pleasing, or numbing our feelings. These survival tools gave us the illusion of control but left us restless and disconnected.

Recovery invites us to live life on God's terms. We are learning new ways to respond to fear, anxiety, or disappointment without falling back into old family roles. We no longer have to be the director, fixer, or invisible one. Instead, we surrender our will and our lives to God, who knows us more deeply than we know ourselves.

“Letting go” can feel ambiguous, but it is about trusting God with the burdens of our past and the uncertainties of our present. It requires patience with ourselves as we grow, as well as faith that God is weaving something greater than we can see.

This Sunday's first reading speaks directly to this need for surrender (Wisdom 9:13–18b):

*Who can know God's counsel,
or who can conceive what the LORD intends?
For the deliberations of mortals are timid,
and unsure are our plans.
For the corruptible body burdens the soul
and the earthen shelter weighs down the mind that
has many concerns.
And scarce do we guess the things on earth,
and what is within our grasp we find with difficulty;
but when things are in heaven, who can search them
out?
Or who ever knew your counsel, except you had
given wisdom
and sent your holy spirit from on high?
And thus were the paths of those on earth made
straight.*

Doing God's will is not about us solving every problem or fixing everyone around us. It is about living with humility, honesty, and openness, trusting Him to guide our steps.

When we take inventory of the survival strategies that once ruled our lives, we see how much pain they caused us and others. Surrendering these patterns makes room for God to form us in freedom. This is part of what Jesus means in this Sunday's Gospel (Luke 14:27, 33): "Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after me cannot be my disciple... anyone of you who does not renounce all his possessions cannot be my disciple."

For us, the cross may be grieving what we lost in childhood, facing uncomfortable emotions we once buried, or renouncing the false security of control. It is not easy, but through surrender God offers healing.

Letting go and adapting to the present takes time. Each time we pause, pray, seek guidance, and accept ourselves as we are, we grow in trust. Each time we step out of old patterns—choosing honesty, setting boundaries, or receiving care from others—we walk closer with Christ. In surrender, we discover freedom, serenity, and hope for today.

Reflection Questions

- What unmet expectations from your past do you still struggle to release to God?
- How does the reading from Wisdom speak to your need for humility and trust?
- What does "renouncing possessions" look like in terms of old roles or survival strategies you carried from your family of origin?

A Day of Hope and Healing

*A virtual recovery summit co-hosted by
Catholic in Recovery and iTHIRST Initiative*

- Special one-day event on **Friday, September 26**
- Join fellow CIR community members from around the world for a day of faith, fellowship, and renewal
- Keynote speakers include Dr. Matthew Breuninger, Dawn Eden Goldstein, and Fr. Sean Kilcawley
- Catholic in Recovery meetings and interactive workshops
- Praise & worship music, prayer, and testimonies of hope
- Register at **catholicinrecovery.com/2025-summit**

Sunday Mass Readings this Week

First Reading: Wisdom 9:13-18b

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

Second Reading: Philemon 9-10, 12-17

Gospel: Luke 14:25-33