

Twenty-third Sunday in Ordinary Time



Suffering often occurs in families because of unmet expectations—when our loved one behaves differently than we think they should or when recovery does not look the way we hoped. Our peace and serenity become tied to outcomes we cannot control. While living in the chaos of addiction, many of us tried to manage, fix, or cover up, clinging to the illusion that if we just worked harder or loved better, things would turn out our way.

Now, in recovery, we are learning to live life on God's terms. We are building new tools to respond to uncomfortable feelings like fear, anxiety, or grief without returning to old coping patterns. We are no longer the directors of every scene, but are learning to hand that role to God, our loving Creator.

"Letting go" can feel vague, but it is really the act of trusting God with the outcomes we cannot manage ourselves. This may require patience and a willingness to live with unanswered questions. Though our instincts press us to take control, recovery invites us to try something different—trusting that God sees the bigger picture.

This Sunday's first reading explores this 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.*

Seeking God's will as family members is not about solving every problem or predicting the future. Instead, it is about living our principles with faith while accepting life as it is in this moment.

In recovery, surrender and letting go follow an honest admission of powerlessness. When we see how much pain our self-will and attempts to control have caused, we begin to trust that God's way must be better. In this sense, humility and "fear of the Lord" are not about cowering in dread, but about living in reverence, accountability, and faith.

"Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after me cannot be my disciple," Jesus declares in this Sunday's Gospel reading as He stresses the importance of establishing a strong spiritual foundation (Luke 14:27). "In the same way, anyone of you who does not renounce all his possessions cannot be my disciple," He adds (Luke 14:33). True surrender is not partial or conditional. We are invited to release even our attachment to outcomes for our loved one, trusting God's plan for them and for us.

Letting go is a daily practice. Each time we pause, pray, seek counsel, and allow God to guide our response, we grow stronger. Each time we set a boundary without resentment, offer love without enabling, or choose patience over panic, we are walking the road of trust. Slowly, God grants us freedom, serenity, and the ability to live one day at a time.

Reflection Questions

- What expectations of your loved one have you needed to let go of in order to find peace?
- How does the reading from Wisdom remind you of your limited perspective and God's greater wisdom?
- What does full surrender look like in your family relationships today?

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