

## Twenty-fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time



As we recover from a state of darkness and isolation, regardless of our addiction, compulsion, or unhealthy attachment, we find that we need wholesale change. We must live our lives based on new principles if we are to be joyous and free. We slowly shed layers of self-centeredness and replace old patterns with what the Church considers four cardinal virtues: prudence, justice, fortitude, and temperance.

Prudence guides judgment based on sound reasoning and is gained by leaning on a core group of individuals who can relate to what we're going through, repeatedly emphasize new ideas, and reframe our lives with hope. As we acknowledge and seek the will of God, we become more in tune with the Spirit that guides our judgment.

Justice is the result of doing what's right in the face of our fallen nature. Making amends to the people we have harmed requires justice—not so that we can relieve ourselves of guilt but because we desire the well-being of the other.

Praying that our neighbor receives all the peace and serenity that we desire for ourselves is a gateway to justice, just as preparing to make amends with a contrite heart readies us for reconciliation. The search for justice includes an assessment of our conduct and actions to keep ourselves from the near occurrence of sin, especially if it becomes habitual.

Fortitude is a cardinal virtue that gives strength to persist through fear and difficulty. It reveals itself when we are tempted to take the easier, softer way in overcoming the root of our spiritual disease. Fortitude strengthens our commitment to recovery as the foundation upon which everything else in our lives rests.

Temperance is a gift of recovery. Depending on the addiction, compulsion, or unhealthy attachment from which we seek healing, we may call it sobriety. In other cases, temperance may be seen as moderation, though many of us may have forfeited the ability to act moderately. Temperance can be developed through seemingly small acts such as choosing to delay gratification. When we practice temperance in other areas of our lives, the urges that fuel our compulsions fade.

The four cardinal virtues contribute to the upright way of living that is strengthened and nurtured through the sacraments and the Twelve Steps. Penance, amends, and restorative justice shape the way we live and move forward with our lives. They build a foundation for freedom rooted in virtue rather than vice.

These four virtues underscore the theme of this Sunday's Gospel reading as Jesus tells the story of a cunning steward. Jesus concludes the story with an important lesson (Luke 16:10-13):

*The person who is trustworthy in very small matters  
is also trustworthy in great ones;  
and the person who is dishonest in very small matters  
is also dishonest in great ones.  
If, therefore, you are not trustworthy with dishonest wealth,  
who will trust you with true wealth?  
If you are not trustworthy with what belongs to another,  
who will give you what is yours?  
No servant can serve two masters.  
He will either hate one and love the other,  
or be devoted to one and despise the other.  
You cannot serve both God and mammon.*

Recovery teaches us that integrity is built not through grand gestures but through daily choices that align us with God's will. Practicing prudence, justice, fortitude, and temperance helps us grow trustworthy in both small and great matters, as Jesus describes in this Sunday's Gospel. When we place God at the center, we discover that we cannot serve both our old patterns and the new life He offers. By choosing virtue over vice and surrender over control, we are set free to live with purpose, joy, and peace—one day at a time.

## Reflection Questions

- Which of the four cardinal virtues—prudence, justice, fortitude, or temperance—do you most need to focus on in your recovery right now?
- How does Jesus' teaching about being trustworthy in "small matters" apply to the daily actions that sustain your recovery?
- What does it mean for you today to "serve God, not mammon" in the context of your recovery journey?

### **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](https://catholicinrecovery.com/2025-summit)

## Sunday Mass Readings this Week

**First Reading:** Amos 8:4-7

**Responsorial Psalm:** Psalm 113:1-2, 4-6, 7-8

**Second Reading:** 1 Timothy 2:1-8

**Gospel:** Luke 16:1-13