

## Reflection Questions

- How has the cross helped you make sense of or begin to heal from your childhood wounds?
- In what ways are you learning to trust others, God, or yourself in recovery?
- What areas of your life are beginning to show signs of “resurrection” or new life?

### Virtual Recovery Summit Next Week

*A Day of Hope and Healing:  
A Catholic Response to Addiction*

- The global CIR community is partnering with iTHIRST Initiative for an encounter with Christ and each other
- Keynote presentations to be given by Dr. Matthew Breuninger, Dawn Eden Goldstein, and Fr. Sean Kilcawley
- This virtual event will include talks, testimonies, recovery workshops, CIR meetings, praise and worship, and more
- Find more information and register today at [www.catholicinrecovery.com/2025-summit](http://www.catholicinrecovery.com/2025-summit)

### Sunday Mass Readings this Week

**First Reading:** Numbers 21:4b-9

**Responsorial Psalm:** Ps 78:1bc-2, 34-35, 36-37, 38

**Second Reading:** Philippians 2:6-11

**Gospel:** John 3:13-17

## Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross



The Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross calls us to remember that God meets us not in our perfection, but in our pain. For many adult children of dysfunctional homes, the cross is more than a symbol—it’s a reality we’ve carried since childhood. In homes marked by alcoholism, codependency, emotional neglect, or inconsistent caregiving, we often learned early that love was conditional, safety was uncertain, and trust came at a cost. We bore crosses we didn’t choose, and we did our best to survive.

Jesus did not flee from His cross. He entered into it fully, embracing humiliation, sorrow, and abandonment to redeem the world. He didn’t just bear our sin—He bore our wounds. For those of us learning to heal from deep relational trauma, this is not just theology—it is deeply personal. Jesus knows what it means to be betrayed, misunderstood, and alone. And He invites us to meet Him there—not to be shamed, but to be restored.

In this Sunday's Gospel, Jesus speaks of His crucifixion as the source of eternal life (John 3:14–17):

*“And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the desert, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, so that everyone who believes in him may have eternal life.*

*For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him might not perish but might have eternal life.*

*For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him.”*

This passage speaks to the heart of our recovery journey. Many of us carry internalized shame that says, “I’m not lovable,” “It’s my fault,” or “If people really knew me, they’d leave.” But Scripture tells a different story: that God so loved you—not some future version of you—but you, in your mess and fear and pain, that He gave His Son to rescue and restore you. This is not a love we have to earn. It’s a love we receive.

In recovery, we begin the sacred work of naming what happened to us—not to stay stuck in the past, but to break the silence that once protected our wounds. We take the risk of getting honest, letting go of our false selves, and allowing God and others to see who we really are. Through the steps, we identify beliefs and behaviors that once helped us survive but no longer serve us: people-pleasing, perfectionism, emotional numbing, distrust, isolation.

The cross shows us that transformation comes through truth and vulnerability. Jesus did not save the world through control or self-sufficiency, but through surrender. Our healing comes not by trying harder, but by learning to trust God, others, and eventually ourselves—one step, one share, one act of faith at a time.

Community is essential. As we gather in meetings, we find others who speak our emotional language—who know what it’s like to feel responsible for everything and invisible at the same time. We discover we are not alone. We learn new ways of relating—based on honesty, respect, and shared spiritual values. We no longer have to perform or hide. We can be seen, heard, and loved as we are.

We begin to see signs of new life: the ability to set boundaries, the courage to feel emotions we once avoided, and the grace to forgive—not to excuse the past, but to free ourselves from its grip. Though healing is not linear and old grief sometimes resurfaces, we return to the cross—not as a place of death, but as a wellspring of compassion and strength. Christ meets us there, not with judgment, but with mercy.

As we exalt the cross, let us remember it is not a sign of defeat, but of love. We are not alone in our suffering. God is with us. His power is made perfect in our weakness. Through His grace, we are being made new.