

Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross



The Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross reminds us that God meets us not in our perfection, but in our suffering. The cross—once a brutal tool of death—has become for us the sign of life, healing, and redemption. For family members impacted by a loved one's addiction, the cross is not an abstract idea. It is the painful burden we carry: the worry, the chaos, the heartbreak of watching someone we love struggle. And yet, we are not alone beneath its weight.

When we first come to recovery, many of us are tired—physically, emotionally, and spiritually. We've tried to fix, to manage, to rescue. We've believed that if we just loved harder or said the right words, things would change. But the cross invites us to a different path—not of control, but of surrender. Step Three teaches us to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God. This doesn't mean we stop caring. It means we entrust the outcomes to a Power greater than ourselves.

In this Sunday's Gospel reading, Jesus speaks of the cross in connection to healing and 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 reminds us that love—not condemnation—is at the heart of the cross. When we try to fix our loved one or control their path, it's often rooted in fear. But when we surrender them to God's care, we begin to experience peace. The cross assures us that Christ knows our pain and walks with us in it. He is the one who saves, and He invites us to rest in that truth.

This is not easy. Surrender is rarely comfortable, and it must be renewed daily. But over time, we find that our serenity does not depend on someone else's choices. We learn to breathe again. We begin to heal—not because our circumstances are perfect, but because our hearts are aligned with God. We find the strength to detach with love, to live one day at a time, and to care for ourselves in healthy, life-giving ways.

Through the process of recovery, we begin to see our own need for healing. We take inventory of our emotional responses, our boundaries, and the ways we may have lost ourselves in the chaos. As we let go, we make space for grace. The cross, once a place of sorrow, becomes a place of transformation. Our lives, too, begin to bear fruit—patience, wisdom, and compassion.

As we gather with others who share this path, we discover that we are not alone. There is strength in spiritual community—others who’ve walked through similar struggles, who remind us that healing is possible. Together, we lift high the cross, not in despair, but in hope. God is still writing our story, and the cross assures us that love has the final word.

Reflection Questions

- What cross are you currently carrying?
- How does the idea of surrendering control feel different from giving up?
- Where have you seen God begin to transform your pain into peace?

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

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