

13th Sunday in Ordinary Time (A)

June 28, 2026

“Atomic habits”

I enjoy summer reading. This summer, I’m enjoying a biography of President Andrew Jackson by H.W. Brands. Summertime is a wonderful opportunity to catch up on books we’ve wanted to read all year, but don’t have the time to do so.

Author James Clear wrote a book in 2018 called *Atomic Habits: An Easy and Proven Way to Build Good Habits and Break Bad Ones*. It is listed as #2 on the *New York Times* best seller list and has been on the list for 343 weeks. “Clear reveals practical strategies that will teach the reader how to form good habits, break bad ones, and master the tiny behaviors that lead to remarkable results” (amazon.com).

The book contains true stories from Olympic gold medalists, award-winning artists, business leaders, life-saving physicians, and star comedians who have used the science of small habits to master their craft and rise to the top of their fields.

This weekend’s readings provide clues to us of how to embrace some spiritual atomic habits that can bring us closer to the God we love.

The author of *Second Kings* recounts the story of the influential woman, who invites Elisha to dine with her, and then provides a room in her house with “a bed, table, chair, and lamp” for his comfort and convenience.”

That woman exercised radical hospitality.

Radical hospitality is a good spiritual atomic habit. It opens our hearts and homes to visitors. Hospitality is more than just offering a warm greeting; it includes offering refreshment, an open ear, a lively conversation, and deep interest in your guest.

I suggest we open our homes to Christ by putting his picture or a crucifix on a wall, arranging a special place for a Blessed Mother statue, and putting an open bible in the living room for reading and reference.

These simple steps can make our homes reflect the faith in our hearts.

Saint Paul compares baptism to both death and life. *“If, then, we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him,”* he tells the Romans in chapter six. When the priest pours blessed water over our heads, we die to all sin and rise in grace. That’s why baptism has been compared to a tomb and a womb: a tomb is a place of death and a womb is a place of life.

A second spiritual atomic habit we might embrace is to **renew our baptismal promises** daily. A simple phrase, “I renounce sin and profess Christ” at the beginning of each day sets us on the right course. By articulating the desires of our hearts, we start to put them into practice. You would be amazed at the changes that take place in your day if you start out by renouncing the devil and embracing Christ in an explicit way.

A third spiritual atomic habit is indicated in the Gospel, when Jesus reminds the apostles: *“whoever does not take up his cross and follow after me is not worthy of me.”* **Carrying a small cross** on our person, or looking at a cross in our homes each day unites us to the Savior who died on the cross to save us. If we are facing a spiritual, financial, family, mental, or physical crisis, we should embrace it as a cross, knowing that God is especially close to us in moments of suffering.

In his document on artificial intelligence, Pope Leo reminded us that pain and suffering make us human. They are part of the fallen human condition, and should be seen as opportunities to embrace the Savior who embraced the saving wood of the cross for your soul and mine.

There you have it. Three spiritual atomic habits (radical hospitality, baptismal renewal, and cross-carrying commitment) that will change your lives in ways you can only imagine.

As we end the month of June, the month of the Sacred Heart, may we open our hearts to embrace these small changes as steps to a renewed and more fulfilled life. God bless you.