

Reflection Questions

- What is your personal response to chaos in your life?
 - Has there been a looming or realized catastrophe that prompted you to surrender to God?

- Have you found yourself resorting to other seemingly less harmful substances or behaviors as a substitute for your primary addiction or unhealthy attachment?
 - How do you apply the principles of 12-step recovery to keep you from substituting one compulsive behavior for another?

- How will you be spiritually preparing yourself for the coming of the Lord this Advent?

Sunday Mass Readings this Week

1st Reading: Jeremiah 33:14-16

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 25:4-5, 8-9, 10, 14

2nd Reading: 1 Thessalonians 3:12-4:2

Gospel: Luke 21:25-28, 34-36

1st Sunday of Advent



This Sunday marks the first Sunday of Advent and begins a new liturgical year. We start anew with the hope of our King's arrival. However, this week's gospel reading begins as Jesus speaks to his disciples of chaos and catastrophe:

*"There will be signs in the sun, the moon, and the stars,
and on earth nations will be in dismay,
perplexed by the roaring of the sea and the waves.
People will die of fright
in anticipation of what is coming upon the world,
for the powers of the heavens will be shaken."*

This tone continues from that of last week's gospel reading as we celebrated Christ the King. This week's gospel continues with Jesus declaring the Good News and urges our preparation:

“And then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. But when these signs begin to happen, stand erect and raise your heads because your redemption is at hand.”

What does this mean for those in recovery from addiction and unhealthy attachments? First, we must come to realize that nothing on this earth lasts, including the feeling we chase when we act out in our compulsive behavior. As we find freedom from the primary source of our addictions or attachments, it can be easy to resort to other seemingly less destructive substances or behaviors as a substitute. Therefore, we gather together in general recovery meetings to understand the wholeness of our spiritual condition through the shared experience of our fellow brothers and sisters.

Furthermore, it is often the case that we must witness the collapse of our own kingdom before awakening to the Kingdom of God. In twelve-step recovery, we refer to this as a *spiritual awakening*. It is through the realization of our own powerlessness that the Son of Man can stake claim of our lives. In fact, Christ continues with a warning that each of us can relate to:

“Beware that your hearts do not become drowsy from carousing and drunkenness and the anxieties of daily life, and that day catch you by surprise like a trap.”

The twelve steps of addiction recovery prepare us to stand before our Lord and structure our lives, one day at a time, to seek Him and His Kingdom for our ultimate fulfillment. The Power which we seek to direct our will and our lives is the same Power we seek as our Daily Bread—it is an enduring power that lasts.

This begins a season to shift our sights from the chaos of this passing world and the fleeting temptations of short-term satisfaction. Throughout Advent, we calibrate our focus to the Son of Man who reveals the love of God in our lives. We await our Lord's coming with hope and patience, knowing that His presence withstands whatever chaos we may experience in this life. As the serenity prayer suggests, we ask God that we may be reasonably happy in this life and supremely happy with Him forever in the next.