

Reflection Questions

- What old things have passed away as you have taken on the identity as a beloved son or daughter of God? What new things have come?
- How do you relate to each of the characters in the Parable of the Prodigal Son?
- What do you do to help maintain your spiritual condition and carry the vision of God's will into your daily activities?

Online/Phone Men's Meeting Available

Meeting for men recovering from pornography and sex addiction

- Every Wednesday at 3:00 PM ET/12:00 Noon PT
- Join by computer, smartphone, or tablet: <https://global.gotomeeting.com/join/922967253>
- Dial in using your phone: (646) 749-3122
Access code: 922-967-253
- Email info@catholicinrecovery.com with questions

Sunday Mass Readings This Week

1st Reading: Exodus 32:7-11, 13-14

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 51:3-4, 12-13, 17, 19

2nd Reading: 1 Timothy 1:12-17

Gospel: Luke 15:1-32

24th Sunday in Ordinary Time



This Sunday's Gospel Reading is one that highlights the journey of the recovering addict and those who have found freedom from attachments—the Parable of the Prodigal Son. Overlapped with the sacraments of the Church, the 12 steps provide a framework to experience how God longs for our return, renewal, and recovery.

As we realize our powerlessness and need for Christ, God may make a new creation of us. Reconciliation is made possible by the blood of Christ, who calls us to pick up our cross as we make a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves. By sharing it with Him, ourselves, and another human being, the shame and sin left by the stain of our trespasses are removed.

Transformation may happen quickly, or it may happen slowly. Either way, we do not have to wait for God to meet us along the way. The Parable of the Prodigal Son tells the account of a pleasure-seeking son who asks his father for his inheritance and then squanders it on drunkenness, sexual promiscuity, and moral debauchery. Upon hitting rock bottom, the son decides to return to the father for help:

*Coming to his senses he thought,
'How many of my father's hired workers
have more than enough food to eat,
but here am I, dying from hunger.
I shall get up and go to my father and I shall say to
him,
'Father, I have sinned against heaven and against
you.
I no longer deserve to be called your son;
treat me as you would treat one of your hired
workers.'"
So he got up and went back to his father.
While he was still a long way off,
his father caught sight of him, and was filled with
compassion.
He ran to his son, embraced him and kissed him.*

This story captures the merciful love of the father and the saving grace received by the younger, prodigal son. However, it does not end there as Jesus remarks on the experience of the elder son. Filled with self-righteousness, the older son scorns at the idea of his father's acceptance of the prodigal, making a case for himself while pointing out the unfair nature of the father's embrace. Divine love tends to be unfair, yet we can be quick to point it out when it is not in our benefit.

While relating to the experience of the younger son, we must heed the warning and learn from the bitter angst of the older son. It is not uncommon for someone to recover from a seemingly hopeless condition then, months or years later, develop a tendency to resent those who have not yet "come to their senses."

Therefore, it is important for us to make a daily commitment to surrender ourselves to God's will and take on the compassionate attitude of the prodigal's father. As the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous (p. 85) notes, "What we really have is a daily reprieve contingent on the maintenance of our spiritual condition. Every day is a day when we must carry the vision of God's will into all of our activities. 'How can I best serve Thee—Thy will (not mine) be done.'"