

Reflection Questions

- How would you describe your tendency to remain rooted in the spiritual solution of recovery?
 - What challenges do you face that bring up old patterns of thinking or direct your thoughts to fear and wickedness?
- Describe a moment or series of events which prompted opportunities to grow in patience.
- What satisfaction do you experience by working the 12 steps or tending to daily labor?

Monthly Catholic in Recovery Newsletter

Visit catholicinrecovery.com to sign up and join our online community

- Monthly testimony from CIR participants
- New meeting announcements
- Resources and articles overlapping the 12 steps and the sacraments
- Be a part of our global mission

Sunday Mass Readings This Week

1st Reading: Malachi 3:19-20a

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 98:5-6, 7-8, 9

2nd Reading: 2 Thessalonians 3:7-12

Gospel: Luke 21:5-19

33rd Sunday in Ordinary Time



We draw close to the conclusion of the liturgical calendar this week as we approach the Solemnity of Christ the King and the season of Advent. The Sunday readings during this time of year tend to provide an apocalyptic account of the mission of Jesus and highlight the need for us to hold on to *patient endurance*. As a warning, apocalyptic literature is to be considered very strong spiritual medicine and people need to read the label carefully before consuming it.

Above all, apocalyptic *medicine* is prescribed to give pain relief to people suffering terrible persecutions. People who are not in fact being persecuted will react strongly to its content and, before long, will *feel* like they're being persecuted, therefore justifying their taking larger doses. This is not much different from the cycle of addiction or the growing impulse to control everything and everyone around us. A search for grace will yield grace just like a search for what scares us will induce fear.

This week's Second Reading gives a good description of what can happen when people lose patience and get carried away with apocalyptic ideas. Lacking any good orderly direction, they simply wander around. Instead of working intently to make spiritual progress, they simply act like busybodies. The model presented by Saint Paul is similar to the way recovery is passed along:

Brothers and sisters:

You know how one must imitate us.

For we did not act in a disorderly way among you, nor did we eat food received free from anyone.

On the contrary, in toil and drudgery, night and day we worked, so as not to burden any of you.

Not that we do not have the right.

Rather, we wanted to present ourselves as a model for you,

so that you might imitate us.

In fact, when we were with you,

we instructed you that if anyone was unwilling to work,

neither should that one eat.

We hear that some are conducting themselves

among you in a disorderly way,

by not keeping busy but minding the business of others.

Such people we instruct and urge in the Lord Jesus

Christ to work quietly

and to eat their own food.

We are either rooted in the solution or we are allowing destructive patterns of the past to influence our direction. A daily examen and close connection with others helps us uncover reality.

Those of us unwilling to work the 12 steps of addiction recovery may find ourselves on a similar path—failing to enhance and grow our spiritual lives through personal self-reflection, daily action, and a commitment to working through the steps with a sponsor. The real work happens *between* our meetings, and it can be easy to tell the difference between those working a spiritual program and those losing patience with history, community, and relationships due to their wicked nature.

The passage from Saint Paul's Second Letter to the Thessalonians provides practical application to work—whether it be the work of recovery or our daily labor. Satisfactory work, along with healthy relationships, is a recipe for joy and an experience of God's providence.

If we are not tending to our own work, regardless of how simple, we tend to drift into less fruitful endeavors and unhealthy mental exercises. When we do authentic work—of whatever kind—we participate in God's ongoing creation and kingdom. Joy comes as a result of seeing our daily labor, however humble, as part of God's plan. What springs forth is freedom and eternal life.