

Reflection Questions

- What motivates you to grow and maintain progress in your recovery?
- Who do you consider as part of your *spiritual board of directors*, or those that offer you regular counsel and guidance?
- What fruits have you experienced as a result of working with a recovery sponsor?

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Sunday Mass Readings This Week

1st Reading: Isaiah 49:3, 5-6

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 40:2, 4, 7-8, 8-9, 10

2nd Reading: 1 Corinthians 1:1-3

Gospel: John 1:29-34

2nd Sunday in Ordinary Time



As we begin a new year, we can take focus on the start of our recovery and spiritual way of life. This also gives us the chance to get rooted in the twelve steps, where we can experience an enriched relationship with Christ and deeper appreciation for the sacraments of the Catholic Church. We begin with Step One:

We admitted we were powerless over addiction and unhealthy attachments—that our lives had become unmanageable.

Willingness, humility, and honesty are expressed when taking action on a first step. Having a general understanding about the misery of our current state or failure to make improvement on our own is not enough. The action taken requires writing, exposing the real darkness of our addictive and unhealthy behavior, and starting to get honest with ourselves.

We don't have to—and should not—go through this alone. Spiritual accompaniment is the lifeblood of recovery and benefits all involved. Our first goal might be to seek a sponsor who has been through the twelve steps and values their recovery enough to know the importance of sharing the Good News with others.

One's sponsor ought not be perfect, but can be a guidepost to Christ by encouraging spiritual growth. John the Baptist literally brought people to Jesus. In this week's Gospel Reading, we hear a pivotal moment in the history of discipleship:

John the Baptist saw Jesus coming toward him and said,

“Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world.

He is the one of whom I said,

‘A man is coming after me who ranks ahead of me because he existed before me.’

I did not know him,

but the reason why I came baptizing with water was that he might be made known to Israel.”

John testified further, saying,

“I saw the Spirit come down like a dove from heaven

and remain upon him.

I did not know him,

but the one who sent me to baptize with water told me,

‘On whomever you see the Spirit come down and remain,

he is the one who will baptize with the Holy Spirit.’

Now I have seen and testified that he is the Son of God.”

This line of mentorship and discipleship has been passed down throughout the ages. We are not asked to journey on our own, and can benefit from the aid of a close companion. Saint Francis de Sales paints a poetic picture of what this relationship may look like:

“Have the greatest confidence in him, mingled with a holy reverence, yet so that the reverence diminish not your confidence, nor your confidence hinder in any way your reverence; confide in him with the respect of a daughter for her father and respect him with the confidence of a son in his mother: in a word, this friendship must be strong and sweet, altogether holy, sacred, divine, and spiritual.”

The spiritual path we are on asks us to be resilient and pick up our cross each day. When we travel this road with others, we find encouragement and perspective that we otherwise would not find ourselves. There is great value in connecting with those both ahead of us and behind us on the journey, recognizing that we are not far apart and much more similar than we might believe.