

## Reflection Questions

- How has your attitude toward suffering changed over the course of your recovery journey?
- What are some practical tools that have helped you let go of resentments and the suffering caused by the perception that things are not fair?
- Who can you be of service to within the next 24 hours?

### Monthly Catholic in Recovery Newsletter

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- Monthly testimony from CIR participants
- New meeting announcements
- Resources and articles overlapping the 12 steps and the sacraments

### Sunday Mass Readings This Week

**1st Reading:** Isaiah 58: 7-10

**Responsorial Psalm:** Psalm 112:4-5, 6-7, 8-9

**2nd Reading:** 1 Corinthians 2:1-5

**Gospel:** Matthew 5:13-16

## 5th Sunday in Ordinary Time



It can be hard to make sense of the suffering we go through in the midst of our loved ones' addictions and compulsive behaviors. This suffering takes a variety of shapes, and as we begin to work through the steps we reflect upon our response to the conditions around us rather than taking inventory of the way we've been mistreated. The 12 steps give us a framework to work through suffering and the resentments that remain as a result. If we get to work on the first step, we understand the value of taking the focus off the addict or alcoholic and, instead, focus on ourselves.

Expecting fairness from life often leaves one disappointed. As we grow spiritually—finding freedom from the family disease of addiction—we begin to see that we are improving in our response to life, even if the conditions around us show no change. As some would say, we begin “living life on life’s terms.”

Scripture is meant to uncover truths about us, God, and the nature of our relationship. The Bible reveals these truths in an assortment of ways, and this week's First Reading clearly outlines several guiding principles often cited by Jesus:

*Thus says the LORD:*

*Share your bread with the hungry,  
shelter the oppressed and the homeless;  
clothe the naked when you see them,  
and do not turn your back on your own.  
Then your light shall break forth like the dawn,  
and your wound shall quickly be healed;  
your vindication shall go before you,  
and the glory of the LORD shall be your rear guard.*

In order to break free from the effects of addiction, compulsions, and unhealthy attachments, God asks that we look to be of service to others. We have a unique ability to share experience, strength, and hope with those looking for grace because we have been granted the same unmerited gift. This does not mean catering to the immediate desires of everyone around us, but rather provides the invitation to connect with others who also find themselves overwhelmed by addiction within the family.

Last week, we heard the author of Hebrews note the effectiveness of Jesus: "Because he himself was tested through what he suffered, he is able to help those who are being tested." Like those that have helped us along the way, we have instant credibility with those who still suffer because we have stood in their shoes.

Christ turns our suffering around, even allowing it to be used as an asset to remain faithful to Him and help others when given the chance. Saint Paul reminds us that we do not need the perfect words as he tells his approach to sharing the light of Christ in this week's Second Reading:

*I came to you in weakness and fear and much trembling,  
and my message and my proclamation  
were not with persuasive words of wisdom,  
but with a demonstration of Spirit and power,  
so that your faith might rest not on human  
wisdom  
but on the power of God.*

Similarly, Jesus calls us to let our light shine for the world to see. This is not done to boost our ego, but to glorify the One who hears the cry of the powerless. As a result of working through the 12 steps, we "carry the message" and "practice these principles in all our affairs." Let us allow the words of Jesus to take root within us:

*You are the light of the world.  
A city set on a mountain cannot be hidden.  
Nor do they light a lamp and then put it under a  
bushel basket;  
it is set on a lampstand,  
where it gives light to all in the house.  
Just so, your light must shine before others,  
that they may see your good deeds  
and glorify your heavenly Father.*