

Reflection Questions

- Is there a circumstance, person, or behavior that you're obsessing over?
- How has God helped you overcome obsessions in the past?
- How does your experience with darkness shape your spiritual life and relationship with God?

33rd Sunday in Ordinary Time



Catholic in Recovery Novena

Sign up today and join the Catholic in Recovery community as we unite in prayer!

- Receive a reflection and prayer in your inbox for nine days
- Journey with the intercession of St. Jude, St. Monica, St. Joseph, St. Augustine and other saints related to addiction recovery
- Register at catholicinrecovery.com/novena

Sunday Mass Readings This Week

1st Reading: Proverbs 31:10-13, 19-20, 30-31

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 128:1-2, 3, 4-5

2nd Reading: 1 Thessalonians 5:1-6

Gospel: Matthew 25:14-30

This, too, shall pass.

This short phrase is often shared with those of us in recovery who are having a hard time seeing anything other than what is immediately in front of us. If we are honest with ourselves, we can all relate to times where we have been unable to see further than the troubles that face us and our families in the moment. When we are obsessing about things beyond our control, we have trouble trusting God or knowing His presence.

The same can also be true when all is going well. We can get caught up in the security and peace offered by our present circumstances, in which case we could benefit from hearing those same words.

In this Sunday's Second Reading, we hear Saint Paul offer a similar word to the early Thessalonian Christian community. He recommends we prepare for the coming of the Lord while framing the attitude we ought to adapt:

Concerning times and seasons, brothers and sisters, you have no need for anything to be written to you. For you yourselves know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief at night. When people are saying, "Peace and security," then sudden disaster comes upon them, like labor pains upon a pregnant woman, and they will not escape.

But you, brothers and sisters, are not in darkness, for that day to overtake you like a thief. For all of you are children of the light and children of the day. We are not of the night or of darkness. Therefore, let us not sleep as the rest do, but let us stay alert and sober.

This suggested one-day-at-a-time attitude can be found among those who continue to work through the twelve steps, maintain connection with the sacraments, and connect with others in fellowship. We can give up hope on having a better past and, instead, focus on what God can do today. Our commitment to spiritual progress requires that we pick up our cross daily, which we do not have to do alone.

As Saint Paul references, we have known darkness. Some of us may still be living in darkness while searching desperately for glimmers of light. Those of us that have been given the gift of recovery must not take it for granted. We know darkness and we know light, and we are asked to balance the two in order to be effective at helping others.

Recovery groups and the Catholic Church serve as two pillars that guide us along this journey. We get the opportunity to meet a variety of people with unique backgrounds and experiences as we stay active in both. When merged, the twelve steps and the sacraments allow us the grace to stay alert and maintain a sober attitude, even when others around us are unwilling to do the same.

Therefore, let us not fall prey to fleeting sources of distress or pleasure. Instead, seek the direction shared by our Lord:

Remain in me as I remain in you, says the Lord. Whoever remains in me bears much fruit.