

First Sunday of Advent



This Sunday marks the beginning of Advent and start of a new liturgical year. We start anew with the hope of our King's arrival. However, this week's Gospel Reading begins as Jesus speaks to his disciples of chaos and catastrophe:

*"There will be signs in the sun, the moon, and the stars,
and on earth nations will be in dismay,
perplexed by the roaring of the sea and the waves.
People will die of fright
in anticipation of what is coming upon the world,
for the powers of the heavens will be shaken."*

This tone continues from that of last Sunday's Gospel Reading as we celebrated the Solemnity of Christ the King. This week's gospel continues with Jesus declaring the good news and urging our preparation:

*"And then they will see the Son of Man
coming in a cloud with power and great glory.
But when these signs begin to happen,
stand erect and raise your heads
because your redemption is at hand."*

What does this mean for men in recovery from lust addiction, sexual compulsions, and other unhealthy attachments? First, we must come to realize that nothing on this earth lasts, including the feeling we chase when we act out in our compulsive behavior. As we find freedom from lust addictions or attachments, it can be easy to resort to other seemingly less destructive substances or behaviors as a substitute. Therefore, we gather together to understand the wholeness of our spiritual condition through the shared experience of our fellow brothers.

Furthermore, it is often the case that we must witness the collapse of our own kingdom before awakening to the Kingdom of God. In 12-step recovery, we refer to this as a *spiritual awakening*. It is through the realization of our own powerlessness that the Son of Man can stake a claim to our lives. In fact, Jesus continues with a warning that each of us might relate to:

“Beware that your hearts do not become drowsy from carousing and drunkenness and the anxieties of daily life, and that day catch you by surprise like a trap.”

The Twelve Steps of addiction recovery prepare us to stand before our Lord and structure our lives, one day at a time, to seek Him and His Kingdom for our ultimate fulfillment. The Power which we seek to direct our will and our lives is the same Power we seek as our Daily Bread—it is an enduring power that lasts.

This begins a season to shift our sights from the chaos of this passing world and the fleeting temptations of short-term satisfaction. Throughout Advent, we calibrate our focus to the Son of Man who reveals the love of God in our lives. We await our Lord’s coming with hope and patience, knowing that His presence withstands whatever chaos we may experience in this life. Let's continue to ask God that we may be reasonably happy in this life and supremely happy with Him forever in the next.

- How have chaos and the collapse of your own personal kingdom brought you closer to God?
- How do you apply the principles of 12-step recovery to keep you from substituting one compulsive behavior with another?
- How will you be spiritually preparing yourself for the coming of the Lord this Advent?

Happy Thanksgiving!

On behalf of the Catholic in Recovery community, we wish you and your family a blessed Thanksgiving.

We are grateful for the opportunity to connect with you via virtual meetings, local groups, our inaugural retreat, prayer teams, and friendships being formed. Please know that you can reach out to others in the CIR community throughout the holidays as we encourage you to expand your network of contacts and take action to unite outside of meetings.

Sunday Mass Readings this Week

1st Reading: Jeremiah 33:14-16

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 25:4-5, 8-9, 10, 14

2nd Reading: 1 Thessalonians 3:12-4:2

Gospel: Luke 21:25-28, 34-36