

First Sunday of Advent



This Sunday marks the First Sunday of Advent and begins a new liturgical year. We start anew with the hope of our King's arrival. However, this Sunday's Gospel Reading begins as Jesus speaks to His disciples about his second coming:

Jesus said to his disciples:

*"As it was in the days of Noah,
so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man.
In those days before the flood,
they were eating and drinking,
marrying and giving in marriage,
up to the day that Noah entered the ark.
They did not know until the flood came and carried
them all away.
So will it be also at the coming of the Son of Man.
Two men will be out in the field;
one will be taken, and one will be left.
Two women will be grinding at the mill;
one will be taken, and one will be left.
Therefore, stay awake!
For you do not know on which day your Lord will
come."*

This tone continues from that of last Sunday's Gospel Reading as we celebrated Christ the King. Jesus continues to urge our preparation:

*"Be sure of this: if the master of the house had known
the hour of night when the thief was coming,
he would have stayed awake
and not let his house be broken into.
So too, you also must be prepared,
for at an hour you do not expect,
the Son of Man will come."*

What does this mean for those in recovery from lust addiction and unhealthy sexual attachments? First, we must come to realize that nothing on this earth lasts, including the pleasures we've chased. As we find freedom from lust, pornography, and sex, it can be easy to resort to other seemingly less destructive substances or behaviors as a substitute. Therefore, we gather to understand the wholeness of our spiritual condition through shared experience with our brothers in Christ.

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 claim of our lives.

Saint Paul makes the claim that each moment should be treated as our last. We can only meet God in the present, not in the past or the future. He alerts us in the liturgy's Second Reading this Sunday:

Reflection Questions

*Brothers and sisters:
You know the time;
it is the hour now for you to awake from sleep.
For our salvation is nearer now than when we first
believed;
the night is advanced, the day is at hand.
Let us then throw off the works of darkness
and put on the armor of light;
let us conduct ourselves properly as in the day,
not in orgies and drunkenness,
not in promiscuity and lust,
not in rivalry and jealousy.
But put on the Lord Jesus Christ,
and make no provision for the desires of the flesh.*

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. As the Serenity Prayer suggests, we 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 to see our community grow through local groups, virtual meetings, retreats, prayer teams, and new friendships being formed. Please know that you can reach out to others in the Catholic in Recovery community throughout the holidays as we encourage you to expand your network of contacts and take action to remain united beyond meetings.

Sunday Mass Readings this Week

First Reading: Isaiah 2:1-5

Responsorial Psalm: Ps 122:1-2, 3-4, 4-5, 6-7, 8-9

Second Reading: Romans 13:11-14

Gospel: Matthew 24:37-44