

One of the most important lessons we learn in recovery is how to live one day at a time. For many of us, addiction was fueled by our attempts to escape the present moment. We replayed yesterday's regrets or worried about tomorrow's uncertainty. Shame about the past and fear of the future kept us restless and dissatisfied. Recovery begins when we start accepting the simple grace of today.

The season of Lent invites us to examine where our hope is placed and what we are truly relying on for life. Many of us once believed that relief would come through a substance, a behavior, or the approval of others. Over time those attachments promised comfort but delivered emptiness. We may have continued chasing them long after they stopped working, feeling increasingly hollow and spiritually numb.

Saint Paul speaks directly to this experience in this Sunday's second reading (Romans 8:8-11):

Those who are in the flesh cannot please God. But you are not in the flesh; on the contrary, you are in the spirit, if only the Spirit of God dwells in you. Whoever does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. But if Christ is in you, although the body is dead because of sin, the spirit is alive because of righteousness. If the Spirit of the one who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, the one who raised Christ from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also, through his Spirit dwelling in you.

When Paul contrasts "flesh" and "spirit," he is not condemning our bodies. Rather, he describes two different ways of living. Life in the flesh is a life centered on self-reliance and attachment. It is the constant attempt to fill spiritual hunger with things that cannot satisfy us. In our active addiction, compulsion, or unhealthy attachment, this

might have looked like alcohol, drugs, lust, food, or control. We placed these things where God belonged.

Eventually that way of life left many of us feeling spiritually dead. We may have gone through the motions of daily life, but inside we felt disconnected from ourselves, from others, and from God. Our emotions flattened, and our world grew smaller. Addiction promised freedom but instead wrapped us in chains.

This Sunday's gospel reveals that God has not abandoned us in that condition. In the story of Lazarus, Jesus arrives at the tomb of his friend who has been dead for four days. Standing before the grave, Jesus calls out with authority (John 11:43-44):

He cried out in a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out!" The dead man came out, tied hand and foot with burial bands, and his face was wrapped in a cloth. So Jesus said to them, "Untie him and let him go."

This scene mirrors the experience many of us recognize in recovery. Addiction left us bound—tangled in habits, lies, fear, and shame. We may have believed that our situation was too far gone to change. Yet Christ speaks a different word over our lives. Through recovery, He calls us out of the tomb and into the light.

The Twelve Steps help us respond to that call. Step One invites us to admit the truth about our powerlessness. Steps Two and Three help us place our trust in a God who restores life. As we continue through the Steps and remain connected to the sacramental life of the Church, the burial cloths begin to loosen. Resentments soften, fear diminishes, and hope returns.

Living one day at a time keeps us close to that new life. Yesterday cannot be changed, and tomorrow is not promised. But today is full of grace. Today we can pray. Today we can reach out for support. Today we can practice honesty, humility, and trust.

Jesus continues to call each of us by name. The question is whether we are willing to step forward from the tomb and allow others to help untie the bonds that once held us captive.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- When have you experienced moments in recovery where it felt like Christ was calling you out of a place of spiritual death?
- What attachments or patterns once promised life but ultimately left you feeling empty?
- What does living "one day at a time" look like for you in your recovery today?

MASS READINGS

FIRST READING Ezekiel 37:12-14

RESP. PS. Psalm 130:1-2, 3-4, 5-6, 7-8

SECOND READING Romans 8:8-11

GOSPEL John 11:1-45

