

SECOND SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

The early stages of lust addiction recovery often require a difficult but freeing truth: our lives had become unmanageable. Whether it was compulsive behaviors, objectifying others, secret habits, or distorted thinking, we came to admit that we could not fix ourselves. This admission is not defeat but the beginning of freedom. It opens the door to surrender, a theme that echoes throughout the Scriptures and the Twelve Steps.

As we begin a new calendar year, we also enter a new stretch of Ordinary Time in the Church's liturgical year. There's nothing "ordinary" about the invitation we receive in this season—it is a daily call to live with intention, honesty, and reliance on God. Step One teaches us to acknowledge our powerlessness; Step Two offers the hope that a Power greater than ourselves can restore us to sanity. We begin to seek that Power not as an abstract idea, but as a Person—Jesus Christ.

This Sunday's gospel (John 1:29-34) shows us John the Baptist pointing his followers toward that Person:

John the Baptist saw Jesus coming toward him and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world. He is the one of whom I said, 'A man is coming after me who ranks ahead of me because he existed before me.' I did not know him, but the reason why I came baptizing with water was that he might be made known to Israel." John testified further, saying, "I saw the Spirit come down like a dove from heaven and remain upon him."

In recovery, we are like those gathered around John. We've tried to save ourselves. We've exhausted our own strategies and illusions of control. Now we need someone

to show us the way to lasting freedom—not through more effort, but through surrender to God's will.

God often leads us to healing through others. Whether through a sponsor, a spiritual director, a therapist, or someone who's further along in recovery, we are called into relationships that point us to Christ. These guides don't offer easy answers. Instead, like John the Baptist, they recognize the real solution and help us to behold it for ourselves.

Saint Francis de Sales, in *Introduction to the Devout Life*, offers this wisdom about spiritual companionship by describing such a relationship as one that "must be strong and sweet, altogether holy, sacred, divine, and spiritual." He encourages us to "have the greatest confidence in [a spiritual companion], mingled with a holy reverence, yet so that the reverence diminish not your confidence, nor your confidence hinder in any way your reverence... confide in him with the respect of a daughter for her father and respect him with the confidence of a son in his mother" (Part I, Chapter 4).

Such trust is vital in lust addiction recovery. We are learning to relate to others not as objects but as people. We begin to form relationships that are rooted in honesty, respect, boundaries, and service. This is a dramatic change for many of us, and it takes time, but God walks with us through it all.

As we move forward in recovery and faith, we begin to see how the Lamb of God takes away not only sin but shame. He restores what was broken. He reshapes how we think, love, and relate. We no longer live in secret or shame. We

walk in the light, one day at a time, with others who are doing the same.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- When have you experienced freedom as a result of surrendering your will to God?

- Who has helped point you toward Christ during your recovery from lust addiction?

- How are you being called to develop stronger, more honest, and spiritually healthy relationships?

MASS READINGS

FIRST READING Isaiah 60:1-6

RESPONSORIAL PSALM Psalm 72:1-2, 7-8, 10-11, 12-13

SECOND READING Ephesians 3:2-3a, 5-6

GOSPEL Matthew 2:1-12