

FIFTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Many of us struggle to make sense of the suffering that came from loving someone caught in addiction or destructive patterns. Some of that suffering was visible: broken trust, financial strain, family conflict, or emotional exhaustion. But much of it was hidden, such as anxiety we could not quiet, resentment we felt ashamed of, isolation, and the constant feeling that we had to hold everything together. In recovery, we slowly begin to see that while we did not cause another person's wounds, we sometimes chose behaviors that kept our own wounds open, such as controlling, rescuing, over-functioning, or neglecting our own needs.

The Twelve Steps help us face this truth without being crushed by it. Step One invites us to admit powerlessness not only over addiction, but over other people's choices, emotions, and outcomes. This honesty is not failure; it is freedom. Denial kept us locked in fear and false responsibility. When we accept that our old ways of coping are not working, surrender becomes a doorway to grace.

As we grow spiritually, recovery becomes less about managing someone else and more about changing how we respond to life. Even when circumstances remain uncertain, something within us begins to shift. We become less reactive and more grounded. Instead of trying to control outcomes, we learn to meet life as it is and trust God with what we cannot manage. As *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions* says, "It never occurred to us that we needed to change ourselves to meet conditions, whatever they were" (p. 47).

This Sunday's first reading connects healing with love in action (Isaiah 58:7-10):

Thus says the Lord: Share your bread with the hungry, shelter the oppressed and the homeless; clothe the naked when you see them, and do not turn your back on your own. Then your light shall break forth like the dawn, and your wound shall quickly be healed; your vindication shall go before you, and the glory of the Lord shall be your rear guard.

Loving someone with addiction can narrow our world until everything revolves around fear, monitoring, and anticipation. God's invitation widens our hearts. Healing deepens as we learn to love with boundaries, compassion, and trust in God rather than control.

The Letter to the Hebrews reminds us that Christ understands suffering. Because He was tested in what He suffered, He is able to help those being tested (Hebrews 2:18). In recovery, we begin to support others not from panic, but from humility and lived experience.

Saint Paul speaks of coming in weakness, not persuasive wisdom, but reliance on God's power (1 Corinthians 2:3-5):

I came to you in weakness and fear and much trembling, and my message and my proclamation were not with persuasive words of wisdom, but with a demonstration of Spirit and power, so that your faith might rest not on human wisdom but on the power of God.

We do not need perfect words to love well. God works through sincerity and willingness.

Jesus says, "You are the light of the world" (Matthew 5:14-16). Our light shines when we choose peace over control, truth over denial, and trust over fear. Recovery teaches us

that God can use even our hardest family experiences to bring light and hope to others.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- Where have attempts to control or rescue kept your own wounds open?

- Where is God inviting you to change your response rather than someone else's behavior?

- How has your experience helped you love with greater wisdom or compassion?

MASS READINGS

FIRST READING Isaiah 58:7-10

RESPONSORIAL PSALM Psalm 112:4-5, 6-7, 8-9

SECOND READING 1 Corinthians 2:1-5

GOSPEL Matthew 5:13-16