

Twelfth Sunday in Ordinary Time



Healthy recovery is rooted in honesty with God, others, and ourselves. We recognized a problem and begin to get honest about our actions and the division it has created. We find the important principle of honesty throughout the Twelve Steps of addiction recovery and come to understand it as essential to fully participate in sacramental grace.

God's power and understanding has no limit. Adequate reflection can uncover moments in our lives when we tried hiding in the darkness from God even though He never stopped pursuing us. The relief of sharing honestly with others can offer spiritual energy to take action and surrender the situation to God. We admit we are powerless over lust, make a thorough moral inventory of ourselves, seek willingness to honestly tackle character defects, reconcile with others we've harmed, and share a hopeful message with those we may be able to help.

This way of life takes time and requires the direct support of someone with whom we feel comfortable, often known as a sponsor. Recovery meetings are a great platform to begin speaking openly about the events in our lives and can be a reliable place to find such trusted individuals. Finding another person who has a foundation in recovery with a similar type of addiction is a crucial part of our spiritual journey and should set a tone of honesty that spreads to every area of our lives.

This Sunday's Gospel Reading reveals the fullness of God's knowledge and love for us:

Jesus said to the Twelve:

"Fear no one.

*Nothing is concealed that will not be revealed,
nor secret that will not be known.*

*What I say to you in the darkness, speak in the light;
what you hear whispered, proclaim on the housetops.
And do not be afraid of those who kill the body but
cannot kill the soul;*

*rather, be afraid of the one who can destroy
both soul and body in Gehenna.*

Are not two sparrows sold for a small coin?

*Yet not one of them falls to the ground without your
Father's knowledge.*

Even all the hairs of your head are counted.

*So do not be afraid; you are worth more than many
sparrows.*

The tone of Jesus in this reading runs parallel to a common expression in recovery—we are only as sick as our secrets. The things we hide from ourselves are the things that have the most power over us. Of course, we don't need to share everything with the whole world, but there should be at least one person we can disclose anything to.

Last week, we focused on the Tenth Step which keeps us close to Christ and on the right path, one day at a time. As we practice this daily inventory, we review our day to find if we've kept something to ourselves which should be discussed with another person at once. When we fail to take corrective action and, instead, resort to secret-keeping, we are setting ourselves on a slippery slope toward old, unhealthy behaviors. Recognition that we have slid back (which is bound to happen on some level) creates an opportunity for continuous conversion.

There are many practical actions we can take to remain in a state of conversion, per the Catechism of the Catholic Church: "Conversion is accomplished in daily life by gestures of reconciliation, concern for the poor, exercise and defense of justice and right, by the admission of faults to one's brethren, fraternal correction, revision of life, examination of conscience, spiritual direction, acceptance of suffering, endurance of persecution for the sake of righteousness. Taking up one's cross each day and following Jesus is the surest way of penance" (1435).

Reflection Questions

- Describe how you have experienced a shift from deception and secret-keeping to a spirit of honesty?
- What daily practices keep you growing spiritually while maintaining honesty with God, others, and yourself?
- Who do you rely upon to share your most intimate experiences in recovery?

What is a Sacrament?

We recognize that the sacraments have a visible and invisible reality, a reality open to all the human senses but grasped in its God-given depths with the eyes of faith. When parents hug their children, for example, the visible reality we see is the hug. The invisible reality the hug conveys is love. We cannot "see" the love the hug expresses, though sometimes we can see its nurturing effect in the child.

The visible reality we see in the sacraments is their outward expression, the form they take, and the way in which they are administered and received. The invisible reality we cannot "see" is God's grace—a free and loving gift. —USCCB

Sunday Mass Readings this Week

First Reading: Jeremiah 20:10-13

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 69:8-10, 14, 17, 33-35

Second Reading: Romans 5:12-15

Gospel: Matthew 10:26-33