

The Solemnity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe



By God's grace, we have been restored from a seemingly hopeless state of darkness and addiction. Helping others who are in need has now become a way of life for us, even when the needy have self-inflicted wounds. This Sunday we celebrate the Solemnity of Christ the King as our liturgical calendar nears its conclusion before Advent. We can look with hope for the return of our King as we gaze at the world through the lens of service.

Addiction recovery literature emphasizes the urgency with which we must take this approach. "Particularly was it imperative to work with others as he had worked with me. Faith without works was dead, he said. And how appallingly true for the alcoholic! For if an alcoholic failed to perfect and enlarge his spiritual life through work and self-sacrifice for others, he could not survive the certain trials and low spots ahead. If he did not work, he would surely drink again, and if he drank, he would surely die. Then faith would be dead indeed" (*Alcoholics Anonymous*, p. 14-15).

This *service imperative* is not only necessary for the recovering alcoholic but any of us walking a pathway of freedom from lust addiction, sexual compulsions, and other unhealthy attachments. The temptation to engage in lust or seek love in unhealthy ways can come at any time and it is vital that we take a proactive approach to recovery through apostolic action. In fact, notice the compelling similarities in both tone and content between the text of the Big Book cited above and the discourse in this Sunday's Gospel Reading:

Jesus said to his disciples:

*"When the Son of Man comes in his glory,
and all the angels with him,
he will sit upon his glorious throne,
and all the nations will be assembled before him.
And he will separate them one from another,
as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats.
He will place the sheep on his right and the goats on
his left.*

*Then the king will say to those on his right,
'Come, you who are blessed by my Father.
Inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the
foundation of the world.*

*For I was hungry and you gave me food,
I was thirsty and you gave me drink,
a stranger and you welcomed me,
naked and you clothed me,
ill and you cared for me,
in prison and you visited me."*

Authentic connections with newcomers to recovery provide an opportunity to give back what we've been freely given, even if we're early in our own journey. The people closest to us who are struggling with addictions or compulsions may not yet be willing to take action, but we can offer hope to those who show up to our recovery meetings or express a desire for new life. Doing so deepens both our faith and recovery.

Perhaps you are in a position where you feel you are most in need—*rock bottom* as it is sometimes referred. Embrace the hand that reaches out to you and know your identity as a beloved son or daughter of God, with whom He is well pleased. A new life awaits you, even if you can't fully see it today.

Our fellowship is rooted in the body of Christ healing the body of Christ. It is a true gift to be in recovery as few lifestyles offer such genuine opportunities to live under the reign of our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe. Let us conclude by reflecting on the words of Jesus:

*“Amen, I say to you,
whatever you did for one of the least brothers of mine,
you did for me.”*

Reflection Questions

- How are you currently committed to serving others in your recovery fellowship, at your church, or in your community?
- How has being of service to others strengthened your own recovery and brought good fruit to your life?
- How has your life been shaped by the service and self-sacrifice of others?

Prayer of Service and Thanksgiving

Lord,
Thank you for never giving up on your pursuit of me.
Every step of my recovery journey has been paved by you,
and you have crafted me beautifully.
Please allow me to see the world through your lenses
so that I may be of maximum service to you
and to those around me.
May I do for others what your love has done for me.
In all things, give me a heart that seeks the weary, the lonely, and
the hopeless so that, one day, we may all be united in your heavenly
kingdom.
Amen. —*Twelve Steps and the Sacraments*, p. 168-169

Sunday Mass Readings this Week

First Reading: Ezekial 34:11-12, 15-17

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 23:1-2, 2-3, 5-6

Second Reading: 1 Corinthians 15:20-26, 28

Gospel: Matthew 25:31-46