

Thirty-first Sunday in Ordinary Time



At the beginning of this liturgical year, we heard Jesus speak the Beatitudes, foreshadowing the kingdom he has come to proclaim. As we near the end of the year, we take a moment to honor, give thanks, and pray for those who have gone before us during the Solemnity of All Saints (November 1) and Commemoration of All Souls (November 2). These days help us remember those who have passed before us after living in the spirit of the Beatitudes.

We might easily announce some of our favorite Catholic saints related to addiction recovery: Saint Maximilian Kolbe, Saint Monica, Saint Augustine, and Venerable Matt Talbot, to name a few. What about the less-known saints among us and before us? In recovery, we get a chance to meet many along our journey who are instruments of healing for future generations.

Like many Christian spiritual principles, there are several layers of overlap found between the Twelve Steps and the Beatitudes. Memories of deceased loved ones and others who put an imprint on us can bring peace when paired with the assuring words of Jesus:

*Blessed are the poor in spirit,
for theirs is the Kingdom of heaven.
Blessed are they who mourn,
for they will be comforted.
Blessed are the meek,
for they will inherit the land.
Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for
righteousness,
for they will be satisfied.
Blessed are the merciful,
for they will be shown mercy.
Blessed are the clean of heart,
for they will see God.
Blessed are the peacemakers,
for they will be called children of God.
Blessed are they who are persecuted for the sake of
righteousness,
for theirs is the Kingdom of heaven.
Blessed are you when they insult you and persecute
you and utter every kind of evil
against you falsely because of me.
Rejoice and be glad,
for your reward will be great in heaven.*

In this Sunday's Second Reading, Saint Paul describes the love that fueled him and other disciples who were, "determined to share with you not only the gospel of God, but our very selves as well." That same self-sacrificial love is found in the rooms of 12-step recovery meetings throughout the world today.

Lust addiction, sexual compulsions, and unhealthy attachments keep us from knowing our true identity as beloved sons and daughters of God. Shame, isolation, and fear led us back to the source of our despair as the only short-term solution we knew. Unfortunately, too many of God's children never make their way out of the death cycle of addiction. We can remain humbly hopeful that they, too, will inherit God's kingdom.

Much like the early, unnamed apostles who spread the gospel of Jesus Christ, many went before us who found the courage to attend their first recovery meeting, admit their powerlessness, experience the fruits of new freedom and new life, and shared what they found with others. The life cycle of recovery will continue to be passed along to future generations as we honor those who came before us. It is our job to participate with God's grace by carrying the message of recovery with those still suffering.

Whether we've known days, months, or decades of freedom, we each play an integral role in this ecosystem of healing. On challenging days, we need the support of our fellows in meetings. On other days, we're provided a chance to carry a message of hope to those who need to hear it. Tomorrow is not promised, and we can only remain in God's presence today. Therefore, we keep our attention fixed on these 24 hours, which makes anything possible.

Reflection Questions

- Who among the dead have made a significant imprint on your recovery and faith life? How?
- Of the eight Beatitudes, which one seems to best capture where you are along your spiritual journey?
- Compare your experience with the death cycle of addiction and the life cycle of recovery.

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- Find more info at **catholicinrecovery.com/growth 23**

Sunday Mass Readings this Week

First Reading: Malachi 1:14b-2:2b, 8-10

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 131:1, 2, 3

Second Reading: 1 Thessalonians 2:7b-9, 13

Gospel: Matthew 23:1-12