

Third Sunday in Ordinary Time



Our focus this week will continue to be building a foundation for recovery and the first step: We admitted we were powerless over addictions, compulsions, and unhealthy attachments—that our lives had become unmanageable. We were called to make a change from the patterns and behaviors that once dictated the terms of our lives and our families. Alcohol, drugs, food, pornography, lust, gambling, spending, technology, codependency, the need for control, or other sources of addiction penetrated our lives in a way that could no longer be managed on our own. The ways we once coped with the tragedy of addiction no longer serve us or those we love.

The Twelve Steps of recovery are prefaced in the *Alcoholics Anonymous Big Book* (p. 59) after noting the cunning, baffling, and powerful nature of addiction: “Without help it is too much for us. But there is One who has all power—that One is God. May you find Him now! Half measures availed us nothing. We stood at the turning point. We asked His protection and care with complete abandon.”

We express our abandonment—or retreat from old actions, behaviors, and ways of thinking—by getting honest with ourselves, turning our attention to our own attitudes and behaviors, and recognizing what we can and can’t change. Putting the specific costs of our patterns and behaviors on paper makes it possible to see the insanity that was orchestrated by addiction. We trust that, with the help of God, this will not be an impossible exercise and is a critical part of making spiritual progress.

Self-knowledge can only get us so far. Acknowledging that we have been ruled by addictions, compulsions, or an unhealthy attachment will not set us free. However, going to meetings, reading recovery literature, connecting with others, and beginning to work on the first step of recovery will lay a foundation for the spiritual growth that is yet to come.

Last week we reflected on the importance of accompaniment in this process. We can’t do it alone, and sharing our work with a sponsor can be just as important as putting ink on paper. We abandon ourselves to God by putting faith in the experience, strength, and hope of others who have gone before us and walk the Road of Happy Destiny (*AA Big Book*, p. 164). We share openly and honestly in meetings and with our sponsors so that the truth may set us free!

The time is now. Jesus echoes the sentiment of taking action to move away from our old behavior and way of life in this Sunday's Gospel:

*"This is the time of fulfillment.
The kingdom of God is at hand.
Repent, and believe in the gospel."*

The disciples of Jesus were no different than we are: simple individuals focused on their own agendas and obligations. They likely had their own set of concerns, fears, and hang-ups. Things changed when they encountered Christ, as He said to them:

*"Come after me, and I will make you fishers of men."
Then they abandoned their nets and followed him.*

The kingdom of God is at hand. Thanks to the Twelve Steps of addiction recovery, we know exactly what to do when Jesus requests that we repent and believe in the Good News. We seek an individual who has been in our position, ask them to take us through the Steps, stay close to the sacraments, and begin the process of writing and sharing. Suddenly we'll find that God is doing for us what we could not do for ourselves.

Reflection Questions

- What personal experience do you have trying to manage life without God? How did that go?
- What are the primary consequences and costs of allowing alcoholism/addiction to dictate the terms of your life and your family?
- What freedom have you found as a result of leaving your "net" and following Jesus?

Building a Foundation for Recovery

CIR's founder Scott Weeman will present at the next live webinar to help you frame a solid recovery plan

- **Monday, January 22 at 9p ET/6p PT** for 1 hour
- Learn common practices and habits developed in early recovery among those who live with purpose, joy, and freedom from a variety of addictions and attachments
- Webinar attendees will leave with spiritual tools and principles blending 12-step wisdom with Catholic faith
- Free for CIR+ Premium members (or \$5 donation)
- my.catholicinrecovery.com/webinar/webinar-signup

Sunday Mass Readings this Week

First Reading: Jonah 3:1-5, 10

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 25:4-5, 6-7, 8-9

Second Reading: 1 Corinthians 7:29-31

Gospel: Mark 1:14-20