

Reflection Questions

- What does a *we* program of recovery look like for you?
- How do you stay committed to your recovery and healthy daily practices even when the gift of desperation has worn off?
- How do you understand redemptive suffering through the lens of your recovery?

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Sunday Mass Readings this Week

First Reading: Deuteronomy 4:32-34, 39-40

Responsorial Psalm: Ps 22:4-5, 6, 9, 18-19, 20, 22

Second Reading: Romans 8:14-17

Gospel: Matthew 28:16-20

The Solemnity of the Most Holy Trinity



Last week we reflected upon the apostles' experience with the strong driving wind of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, remembering our own spiritual awakening and the lasting impression it has had. We may be grateful for the moments when we are seized by the will of God and given clear directions to the path we ought to take. Inevitably, the storm will calm but our identity is forever changed.

This Sunday we turn our rejoice toward the Holy Trinity, recognizing the beautiful relationship we maintain with God the Father, Jesus Christ the Son, and the Holy Spirit. This is a central aspect of our Catholic faith and something we acknowledge every time we make the sign of the cross. To be loved by God is to be part of the Three-in-One (Triune) relationship that is the Holy Trinity.

Saint Paul summarizes this notion in the 8th chapter of his Letter to the Romans, this Sunday's Second Reading:

Brothers and sisters:

For those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.

For you did not receive a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear,

but you received a Spirit of adoption, through whom we cry, "Abba, Father!"

The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God,

and if children, then heirs,

heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ,

if only we suffer with him

so that we may also be glorified with him.

In our recovery from the spiritual family disease of addiction which had us entrapped, we are given a chance to transform from a spirit of slavery to a spirit of freedom through our adoption in the Holy Trinity. In this relationship, we can shed the shame of our past and re-frame our attitude alongside our brothers and sisters seeking spiritual progress.

It is often said that recovery is a *we* program, not an *I* program. We need each other. As baptized Christians, this also implies that our relationship with the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit is an essential part of the experience. It cements our identity as children of God, co-heirs to His kingdom with Christ, and vessels of the Holy Spirit. By replacing *I* with *we*, we replace *illness* with *wellness*.

Paul concludes this passage by noting that we are to suffer with Christ so that we may also be glorified with him. Our experience in recovery tells us that as we get better, the circumstances around us may still be troubling. Alone, we may not be able to withstand this suffering—certainly not in a redemptive way. We find courage through our union with the Holy Trinity and the loving support of others in our fellowship.

Sometimes the voice of God can only be heard when we empty our minds and quiet our hearts. Affirmation that we are on the right path comes when we experience the fruits of the Holy Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control (Galatians 5:22-23).

We are not always moved by good feelings. The *pink cloud* of recovery, which often accompanies the physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual improvements we experience through early sobriety and abstinence, tends to fade over time. Therefore, it is crucial to maintain the daily practices and commitments that helped us find freedom, even when the gift of desperation wears out. We continue to make spiritual progress through working the Twelve Steps, serving others, and deepening our relationships with the Holy Trinity.