

Fifteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time



Many of us enter recovery hoping to find a quick fix to the family spiritual disease of addiction that can be completed in isolation to not let anyone find out. However, just like the consequences of addiction extend beyond an individual to their families, friends, and communities, recovery demands that we connect with others to find freedom from the unhealthy patterns and compulsive practices we've formed to cope.

The healing process invariably involves relationships. This begins by welcoming those who show up to offer help. Support can be difficult to receive as many of us feel more comfortable helping others than we do letting others help us. Christian accompaniment was initiated by Jesus and provides the opportunity to be adopted into the mission of our Lord. We'll find that 12-step recovery takes after the model of discipleship handed down by Jesus.

This Sunday's Gospel Reading tells of Jesus sending off his disciples and asking them to be his hands and feet:

*Jesus summoned the Twelve and began to send them out two by two
and gave them authority over unclean spirits.
He instructed them to take nothing for the journey
but a walking stick—
no food, no sack, no money in their belts.
They were, however, to wear sandals
but not a second tunic.*

Notice that the request implies that they have all they need to build Christian bonds. Their own experience, strength, and hope is enough. We are asked to go into the world with each other in the same way, but how often do we feel inadequate to approach another with the love of God in our hearts? The Gospel continues:

*Jesus said to them,
"Wherever you enter a house, stay there until you leave.
Whatever place does not welcome you or listen to you,
leave there and shake the dust off your feet
in testimony against them."
So they went off and preached repentance.
The Twelve drove out many demons,
and they anointed with oil many who were sick and cured them.*

Some of the people we encounter may not be ready, willing, or open to hear the message. Perhaps we have been there ourselves. However, when done with the guidance of God and the accompaniment of a brother or sister in Christ, new relationships can be a pathway to freedom for all involved. This adds joy, meaning, and purpose to a life in recovery!

Healthy relationships take time to form and can be a model for healing broken ones that still challenge us. In addition, healthy relationships will often do the following:

- reflect the image of God
- repair unhealthy attachment styles (which may have begun in childhood)
- root individuals in truth
- literally re-wire our brain structure
- provide a powerful sense of belonging and support
- give hope for a better life.

We can only be of help to those who are willing and can benefit from our experience, namely others who know the pain of family addiction. We may not be the catalyst for our struggling loved one to change, but we can brighten the day of another in our shoes. As we further our journey through recovery, we realize that we are not alone and learn to draw strength from others in our fellowship. The new life offered by Jesus Christ through recovery is a beautiful contrast to the dark and isolated death of active addiction.

Reflection Questions

- Consider and describe how you have encountered Jesus through fellowship and become open to new relationships since starting recovery.
- How do you share a message of hope with others impacted by family addiction?
- What joy, meaning, and purpose have sprung from new relationships formed in recovery?

Attend a CIR Retreat in 2024

There are several retreat opportunities around the U.S. this year to strengthen your recovery and faith

- Hear inspiring testimonies, attend meetings, engage the sacraments, participate in workshops, and more!
- Dedicated time for quiet meditation and fellowship
- Remaining 2024 retreats include Wichita, KS (Aug 2-4); Huntington, IN (Aug 23-25); Oceanside, CA (Sept 27-29); and Subiaco, AR (Nov 1-3)
- For more information and to register for a retreat visit catholicinrecovery.com/events

Sunday Mass Readings this Week

First Reading: Amos 7:12-15

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 85:9-10, 11-12, 13-14

Second Reading: Ephesians 1:3-14

Gospel: Mark 6:7-13