

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



We are blessed to experience the hand of Christ working in our lives. Helping others who are in need has 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 conclusion. We can look with hope for the return of our King as we see the world through the lens of service and sacramental recovery.

Addiction recovery literature emphasizes the urgency with which we must take this approach. Pages 14 and 15 of the Big Book of *Alcoholics Anonymous* speaks to the solution for all who are impacted by addictions, compulsions, and unhealthy attachments:

“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.”

This service imperative runs parallel with the message offered by Jesus in this Sunday’s Gospel reading. Since January, most of our liturgical Gospel readings have been taken from the Gospel of Mark. Mark’s gospel has a great theme of the reign of God. Over the past several weeks, Jesus has been attempting to help us understand that He is the Messiah of a different kind of kingdom than most people imagine. When we begin the work of recovery, we begin to see what Jesus can do as He takes leadership of our lives.

This Sunday’s Gospel reading finds Jesus face-to-face with the authorities who will put Him to death:

Jesus answered, “My kingdom does not belong to this world.

*If my kingdom did belong to this world,
my attendants would be fighting
to keep me from being handed over to the Jews.
But as it is, my kingdom is not here.”*

So Pilate said to him, “Then you are a king?”

Jesus answered, “You say I am a king.

*For this I was born and for this I came into the world,
to testify to the truth.*

Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice.”

As attendants of Christ, we are not tasked with fighting or battling. Rather, He is the one who has shed blood for all and invites us to declare this good news to others. As Catholics in recovery, this is not only a part of our Christian calling but also essential to our freedom from lust.

Perhaps you are in a position where you feel you are most in need—your personal rock bottom. Embrace the hand that reaches out to you and embrace your identity as a beloved child of God, with whom He is well pleased. A new life awaits you, one that you may not be able to envision today.

Our fellowship is rooted in the body of Christ embracing the body of Christ. It is a gift to be in recovery as few lifestyles offer such genuine opportunities to live under the reign of our Lord. Let us conclude today's reflection with a prayer of service and thanksgiving from *The Twelve Steps and the Sacraments* (p. 168-169):

“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 lens 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.”

Reflection Questions

- How have you responded to the service imperative at the heart of 12-step recovery?
- How has your life been shaped by the service of others?
- Consider and share about an experience that would encourage a newcomer to embrace a helping hand reaching out to them.

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Sunday Mass Readings this Week

First Reading: Daniel 7:13-14

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 93:1, 1-2, 5

Second Reading: Revelation 1:5-8

Gospel: John 18:33b-37