

Fifteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time



Addiction doesn't just harm the individual struggling—it wounds everyone in its orbit. As family members, we often experience a slow erosion of trust, peace, and connection. We might carry resentment, shame, or a persistent sense of failure. Our dreams of stability, intimacy, and joy may feel shattered. We can be left emotionally exhausted, confused, and uncertain where to turn for hope. Just like the man beaten and abandoned in this Sunday's Gospel, we too have felt stripped, left half-dead on the side of the road by addiction's brutal impact.

This Sunday's Gospel recounts the parable of the Good Samaritan. A scholar tests Jesus, asking what is needed for eternal life. Jesus turns the question back on him, and the man answers with the summary of the law (Luke 10:27-28):

*"You shall love the Lord, your God,
with all your heart,
with all your being,
with all your strength,
and with all your mind,
and your neighbor as yourself."
[Jesus] replied to him, "You have answered correctly;
do this and you will live."*

But when pressed to define "neighbor," Jesus tells a story of radical mercy that transcends religious and cultural expectations (Luke 10:30–37):

*"A man fell victim to robbers
as he went down from Jerusalem to Jericho.
They stripped and beat him and went off leaving him
half-dead.
A priest happened to be going down that road,
but when he saw him, he passed by on the opposite
side.
Likewise a Levite came to the place,
and when he saw him, he passed by on the opposite
side.
But a Samaritan traveler who came upon him
was moved with compassion at the sight.
He approached the victim,
poured oil and wine over his wounds and bandaged
them.
Then he lifted him up on his own animal,
took him to an inn, and cared for him.
The next day he took out two silver coins
and gave them to the innkeeper with the instruction,
'Take care of him.
If you spend more than what I have given you,
I shall repay you on my way back.'
Which of these three, in your opinion,
was neighbor to the robbers' victim?"
He answered, "The one who treated him with mercy."
Jesus said to him, "Go and do likewise."*

FYZWjcb Ei Yghcbg

This powerful image speaks to our experience as loved ones of addicts. Sometimes, we've played the priest or Levite—detaching emotionally or spiritually because it hurt too much. Other times, we've tried to be the rescuer, pouring ourselves out and finding that our well was dry. But in many cases, we've been the wounded traveler—confused, exhausted, and desperate for relief.

The Good Samaritan, a figure rejected by his culture, shows mercy and care in a way that reflects God's own love. He doesn't ask how the man got there or whether he deserved help. He simply responds with compassion and dignity. This is the mercy we need from God and others. Recovery begins when we allow ourselves to receive that mercy, to recognize our wounds, and to be honest about our limits.

The oil and wine the Samaritan pours over the man's wounds represent the sacraments and healing balm of the Church. God meets us in our brokenness. He doesn't wait for us to "get it together." In recovery spaces, we find a place to be honest about our powerlessness, and we're surrounded by people who offer love without judgment.

Jesus tells us, "Go and do likewise." This doesn't mean enabling, fixing, or controlling our addicted loved ones. Rather, it invites us to become instruments of peace and compassion—first to ourselves, then to others. We learn to love with boundaries, to serve without being consumed, and to witness God's power in the most unexpected ways.

God sees every tear we've cried, every sleepless night, every moment of heartbreak. He wants to restore us—not just to survive, but to thrive. In that restoration, we can help others along the way, just as we've been helped.

- How have you experienced yourself as the wounded traveler in the journey of addiction and recovery?
- Who has been a "Good Samaritan" to you in your time of need, and how did their compassion help you heal?
- What does it mean for you to "go and do likewise" in the context of your loved one's addiction?

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Sunday Mass Readings this Week

First Reading: Deuteronomy 30:10-14

Responsorial Psalm: Psalms 69:14, 17, 30-31, 33-34, 36, 37

Second Reading: Colossians 1:15-20

Gospel: Luke 10:25-37