

Fifteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time



The path of lust addiction leaves deep scars. It robs us not only of connection with others but also of our connection with ourselves and with God. The pursuit of fantasy and instant gratification strips away our ability to feel real intimacy and joy. Over time, we begin to lose sight of who we are. What initially seemed like a source of comfort becomes a trap, leaving us ashamed, isolated, and spiritually depleted. Like the man in this Sunday's Gospel, we often find ourselves half-dead on the side of the road, unsure if anyone will come to our aid.

In this Sunday's reading, Jesus is asked what must be done to inherit eternal life. The answer He affirms is familiar but incredibly demanding: a total love of God and neighbor. The Gospel recalls (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."*

Many of us have heard this verse before, but in addiction, it can feel impossible. Our hearts have been divided. Our strength, depleted. Our minds, consumed by obsession and shame. How do we love God or others when we barely know how to show up honestly in our own lives?

Jesus goes on to tell the parable of the Good Samaritan (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."*

This is our story. We have been the man on the road—beaten up by our sin, rejected by those who don't understand, and wondering if anyone will stop for us. Our addiction made us feel unworthy of love and incapable of change. But then someone showed up. Perhaps it was a sponsor, a spiritual director, or another person in recovery. Someone who had been there. Someone who didn't flinch at our story, but who looked upon us with mercy.

That mercy is the heart of recovery. The wine and oil symbolize Christ's healing touch through the sacraments, the fellowship of recovery, and the grace we receive through honest connection. Slowly, through confession, accountability, and daily spiritual practices, our wounds begin to heal. We realize that we are not alone and that we are not beyond God's love.

Often, the most powerful healing comes when we become willing to do for others what someone did for us. Jesus ends the parable by saying, "Go and do likewise." We are not called to fix others, but to walk with them. When someone new enters the recovery journey—full of shame, confusion, or fear—we can meet them with the same mercy that was extended to us.

We also must be mindful not to slip into the roles of the priest or Levite—avoiding our own pain or pretending to be someone we're not. The path of lust recovery is one of humility. We serve best when we stay grounded in our need for God and others. Recovery is not about arriving; it's about walking with others on the way.

The Samaritan didn't heal the man instantly. He committed to the long haul, to caring for him and trusting others to help carry the load. In our own way, we are called to be both recipients and bearers of this healing grace.

- In what ways has your lust addiction left you feeling spiritually or emotionally "half-dead"?
- Who has helped pour oil and wine over your wounds, and how did that impact your healing?
- How are you being invited today to offer that same mercy to someone else in recovery?

The Catholic in Recovery Podcast

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- Fr. Sean Kilcawley and Scott Weeman share insights from their personal, pastoral, and clinical experiences
- Recent topics include misconceptions about 12-step recovery, forgiveness, and lust addiction recovery
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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