

Sixteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time



When life spins out of control, we tend to respond in one of two ways—either by hiding and isolating or by getting very busy. 12-step recovery integrated with the sacraments forms us with new tools and methods to trust God, discern the next right indicated action, and live a meaningful, balanced life.

This Sunday, we hear another familiar gospel story. Jesus is welcomed by Martha and her sister Mary upon entering a village. While Mary is seated at the feet of Jesus, listening to Him speak, Martha is burdened with the duties of serving. Frustrated, Martha begins a dialogue (Luke 10:40-42):

*“Lord, do you not care
that my sister has left me by myself to do the serving?
Tell her to help me.”
The Lord said to her in reply,
“Martha, Martha, you are anxious and worried about
many things.
There is need of only one thing.
Mary has chosen the better part
and it will not be taken from her.”*

Many people read the story of Martha and Mary as a reflection on action versus contemplation. This seems fitting, particularly as our culture values excessive busyness. In fact, when asked how we’re doing, we often respond with what we’re doing as we present an exhausting list of deeds to prove our worth. As we relate this story to our own journey, we might focus on Jesus’ statement, “There is need of only one thing.”

Recovery is a program of action. We often hear that you cannot think your way into right action, but you can act your way into right thinking. This usually involves changing our behavior even when our attitude is not yet ready. However, action that is not organized by God adds additional anxiety and worry to our self-absorbed patterns. We must first learn to hear and discern God’s word. This can be done through various forms of prayer, reading Scripture, and having honest conversations with others in our recovery fellowships.

The life-and-death nature of addictions, compulsions, and unhealthy attachments streamlines the path toward relying on God. Once we can see our recovery as the path orchestrated by our Lord, He becomes the One Thing. If we stay close, few other things matter.

Recovery literature provides a simple way to help God order our actions each day:

“In thinking about our day we may face indecision. We may not be able to determine which course to take. Here we ask God for inspiration, an intuitive thought, or a decision. We relax and take it easy. We don’t struggle. We are often surprised how the right answers come after we have tried this for a while” (*Alcoholics Anonymous*, p. 86).

When we seek God in prayer and meditation, He help organize our life. In this way, discernment becomes easier. We do not struggle coming up with the next right task because God is our Employer. We may not be able to avoid suffering, and we certainly do not choose to forget about all past sufferings. Our usefulness to others still seeking freedom relies upon our ability to relate to their current experience.

Therefore, with our mind, body, and soul ordered in the ways of God, we have the freedom to express our gratitude for what was, what is, and what is yet to come. We are disciples of Jesus and share the good news of our recovery as He would have us. Saint Paul expresses a similar mission in this Sunday’s second reading (Colossians 1:24):

Brothers and sisters:

*Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake,
and in my flesh I am filling up
what is lacking in the afflictions of Christ*

Grace happens when we see that our sufferings can heal others. Freedom happens when we can maintain peace at the feet of Jesus as we listen to Him speak.

Reflection Questions

- Describe how you find balance between action and contemplation in your recovery.
- How do you make decisions in recovery, either day-to-day choices or larger ones that require discernment?
- What does it look like for you to sit at the feet of Jesus and choose “the better part” today?

Integrate Faith & Twelve Steps with CIR+

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- **Daily Mass reflections** UbXGUbhFYZYMcgbg
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Sunday Mass Readings this Week

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