

## Reflection Questions

- How have you been positively impacted by personal relationships along your recovery journey?
- Can you recall moments when the accompaniment of another person has made it easier to complete a task, help another person, or share a message of hope?
- Have you found yourself stuck trying to share a message of hope and Christian love to someone unwilling or unable to hear it?

## 15th Sunday in Ordinary Time



Addiction is not simply a problem to be fixed, but rather involves a person, a family, and a community. Each has unique value in the eyes of God, and the healing process cannot be done alone. It requires relationship.

We find recovery through relationship and our relationships recover. This begins by welcoming those that 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. Inviting other men into our struggles with pornography and lust runs counter to every instinct we've previously held. We can look to the consequences of our actions to see how that has worked out for us. Christian accompaniment was initiated by Jesus and provides the opportunity to be adopted into the mission of our Lord while finding freedom from lust, pornography, and sex addiction.

This week's Gospel reading (Mk 6:7-13) details Christ 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 begins by implying that they have all they need in order 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 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 whom 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 in Christ, new relationships can be an avenue to freedom for all involved. Time is spent truly getting to know each other, as we are blessed to experience in recovery groups and individual relationships that spur from them.

Healthy relationships take time to form and can be a model for healing broken relationships that still haunt us. In addition, they will often also 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 are not alone, and a new life offered by Christ is a beautiful contrast to the dark and isolated death of active addiction.