

Reflection Questions

- Have you found yourself more concerned with removing the splinter in another's eye than removing the beam within your own?
 - If yes, how are you being called to engage in self-discovery?
 - If no, what has been helpful as you focus on keeping your side of the street clean?

- What fruits are blossoming as you overlap the twelve steps of addiction recovery with the sacramental life of the Church?

CIR Phone Meetings Starting March 5

Meetings specifically for men and women recovering from pornography and sex addiction

- Tuesdays, Wednesdays, & Thursdays
- 7:00 PM ET/4:00 PM PT
- Call-in phone number: (302) 202-1118
- Access code: 975396

Sunday Mass Readings This Week

1st Reading: Sirach 27:407

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 92:2-3, 13-14, 15-16

2nd Reading: 1 Corinthians 15:54-58

Gospel: Luke 6:39-45

8th Sunday in Ordinary Time



We cannot help others without first finding help ourselves. We cannot truly enter the grace of recovery without taking the step of admitting our powerlessness over addiction or people, places, and things—realizing that our lives had become unmanageable. As we invite God and others to lead our recovery, we experience the serenity to accept the things we cannot change, the courage to change the things we can, and the wisdom to know the difference.

This is a radical shift from our previous belief that our problems were of everyone else's making. Our pride and self-determination wanted to point the finger at others who wronged us or were not acting according to our plans. As a result, we felt justified in our self-righteous anger and disdain for the way the world was treating us. We could not stop addiction from ruling our family and lacked the capacity to create change. It was easier to shift blame and responsibility on others and doubt what God could really do for us.

“Stop judging and you will not be judged. Stop condemning and you will not be condemned. Forgive and you will be forgiven,” we heard Jesus declare last week. This week’s Gospel builds upon this challenging message and directs us to look inward at the one thing we can change—ourselves.

Why do you notice the splinter in your brother's eye, but do not perceive the wooden beam in your own? How can you say to your brother, 'Brother, let me remove that splinter in your eye,' when you do not even notice the wooden beam in your own eye? You hypocrite! Remove the wooden beam from your eye first; then you will see clearly to remove the splinter in your brother's eye.

The concept of self-discovery provides the tools to abandon our need to see the flaws in our brothers and sisters and, instead, consider our own growth and spiritual progress. Jesus is indicting what those in recovery call *two-stepping*—jumping from the first step to the twelfth step without completing the interior work that is asked of us in between.

The inclination to help others may come from a virtuous place that wants their healing, but it can also be a defense mechanism that distracts us from the transformation we are to undergo ourselves. We will always be granted opportunities to help others, and our assistance is more effective when we are delivering experience, strength, and hope based on the interior change that Christ has completed within us.

People are naturally attracted to honesty, humility, and openness. It is likely that we have been drawn to the rooms of recovery because we knew of a change needed in our lives. We stay because we are inspired by the authenticity shared by those who are continuing to be transformed by the will of God. Jesus speaks to this process as His sermon continues:

A good tree does not bear rotten fruit, nor does a rotten tree bear good fruit. For every tree is known by its own fruit.

What fruits are yielded by your recovery? Saint Paul suggests several that we can look to when we are living life directed by the Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control (Galatians 5:22). These come by way of asking God to help dislodge the beam in our own eye and participating in the spiritual experience offered by the twelve steps.