

Reflection Questions

- Are you someone who tends to share the good news of your recovery or your faith with others?
 - If so, what encourages you to do so?
 - If not, what fears or obstacles stand in your way?

- Can you recall who has played a key role in shaping your faith or introducing you to recovery?
 - What was it about them or their message that appealed to you?

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Sunday Mass Readings This Week

1st Reading: Isaiah 66:10-14c

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 66:1-3, 4-5, 6-7, 16, 20

2nd Reading: Galatians 6:14-18

Gospel: Luke 10:1-12, 17-20

14th Sunday in Ordinary Time



The darkness of our past blends with the joy of our recovery to give us everything we need to share hope with those still suffering. Witnessing others find freedom from the bondage of addiction adds meaning and value to our lives. Recovery is a gift that can only be kept if it is given away. It can seem counter-intuitive to consider how we can help others when we feel that we are desperately in need of help ourselves. As we are learning, service is an element of recovery that cannot be overlooked.

Discussions are often had about how the Church can grow and appeal to those not participating in the sacraments. We have found that sharing experience, strength, and hope with those who are willing to receive it is a very effective way to share a message. We recognize that God has all the power and that service and evangelization happen according to His agenda.

This week's Gospel Reading tells the story of Jesus commissioning a large group of disciples who are to go out "like lambs among the wolves" and share the good news. "The harvest is abundant but the laborers are few; so ask the master of the harvest to send out laborers for his harvest," Jesus tells the crowd. Jesus then directs the group:

*"Carry no money bag, no sack, no sandals;
and greet no one along the way.
Into whatever house you enter, first say,
'Peace to this household.'
If a peaceful person lives there,
your peace will rest on him;
but if not, it will return to you.
Stay in the same house and eat and drink what is
offered to you,
for the laborer deserves his payment.
Do not move about from one house to another.
Whatever town you enter and they welcome you,
eat what is set before you,
cure the sick in it and say to them,
'The kingdom of God is at hand for you.'"*

In a similar way, we maintain our recovery from addiction and attachments by sharing the message of a spiritual awakening with others while practicing 12-step principles in all our affairs. We do not take it personally when someone is not ready to change, even when the person is a family member or close friend. Instead, we focus our time on those who might be willing now and await a moment where we can be most effective to another in the future.

In too many ways, Christians have shifted away from the humble form of evangelization described by Jesus. His approach is consistent with that of the 12th Step as we typically go out in pairs when tending to someone looking for help. We are sharing the good news of a *we* program and the joys of Christian fellowship. Even our aid to others should not be done in isolation.

Our message is a peaceful one, not one which points the finger or condemns the lost individual. We've been in their shoes and, if they are ready, our peace will rest upon them. As we may know, desperation is a state-of-mind that can lend itself to surrender and new life. Ask questions and listen rather than caving into the temptation to share everything you know.

This week's Gospel Reading concludes with Christ's laborers rejoicing in their harvest. We believe we can access the same wonderful power if we stay close to Him and seek His direction:

*"Lord, even the demons are subject to us because of your name."
Jesus said, "I have observed Satan fall like lightning from the sky.
Behold, I have given you the power to 'tread upon serpents' and scorpions
and upon the full force of the enemy and nothing will harm you. Nevertheless, do not rejoice because the spirits are subject to you,
but rejoice because your names are written in heaven."*