

Reflection Questions

- How has God revealed the presence of the Holy Spirit within you?
- What internal or external obstacles make it challenging to accept the generosity and mercy that God offers you?
- What spiritual routines, prayers, or practices help you order your life around God?

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Sunday Mass Readings This Week

1st Reading: Genesis 18:20-32

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 138:1-2, 2-3, 6-7, 7-8

2nd Reading: Colossians 2:12-14

Gospel: Luke 11:1-13

17th Sunday in Ordinary Time



The 12 steps of addiction recovery are ordered in a way that allows us to have deep and effective spiritual experiences, shaping the way we view ourselves, our fellows, and our God. He enters into our hearts and reveals what has been there all along—the presence of the Holy Spirit.

This theme is woven throughout Saint Paul's letter to the Colossians as heard in this week's Second Reading:

*Brothers and sisters,
You were buried with him in baptism,
in which you were also raised with him
through faith in the power of God,
who raised him from the dead.
And even when you were dead
in transgressions and the uncircumcision of
your flesh,
he brought you to life along with him,
having forgiven us all our transgressions;*

Coming to grips with the fact that we are powerless over addiction and unhealthy attachments puts us in a position to seek help beyond human aid. Believing that our lives had become unmanageable prompts the need for something far greater than ourselves if we are to have a lasting psychic change. For some, this means enlarging the concept we have of God and experiencing the fruit of forgiveness through our kinship in God's kingdom.

While the 12 steps guide us in finding a transformative spiritual awakening, the Lord's Prayer is our request for God to order our lives in a way that centers around Him. Prayer is not an attempt to change God's mind, but rather a humble appeal for God to bend our will toward His. Jesus teaches us to honor God above all things through prayer as we recite, "Hallowed be Thy name."

We plea for His kingdom which, as painted by the life and ministry of Jesus, is all-inclusive, peaceful, compassionate, and full of forgiveness. Through aligning our will to God's, we pray that we might be advocates for God's kingdom as He shapes our attitudes and behavior. In order to maintain His presence in our lives and the world, we ask for our daily bread—the very body and blood of Jesus which offers divine substance for our journey.

Forgiveness is a concrete act of repairing broken relationships and is central to both the 12 steps and the spiritual traditions of the Church. As we are forgiven by God, we extend forgiveness and healing to our human relationships. We do this by taking our own moral inventory, sharing it with God, and making amends through the 8th and 9th step.

This week's Gospel Reading provides insight into how God cares for us. Upon teaching his disciples the Lord's Prayer, Jesus interprets the Father's mercy and generosity:

*"And I tell you, ask and you will receive;
seek and you will find;
knock and the door will be opened to you.
For everyone who asks, receives;
and the one who seeks, finds;
and to the one who knocks, the door will be
opened.
What father among you would hand his son a
snake
when he asks for a fish?
Or hand him a scorpion when he asks for an egg?"*

There are a variety of internal and external obstacles which make it difficult to accept that God accepts us. We are made in the image and likeness of God, but too often we envision God through the image we have of ourselves and others. While stepping into the stream of acceptance, we would be wise to integrate the essence of the Lord's Prayer into our daily lives as we work through the steps and seek recovery, one day at a time.