

Reflection Questions

- Have you found yourself resorting to other seemingly less harmful substances or behaviors as a substitute for your primary addiction or unhealthy attachment?
 - How do you apply the principles of 12-step recovery to keep you from substituting one compulsive behavior for another?
- How will you be spiritually preparing yourself for the coming of the Lord this Advent?

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Sunday Mass Readings This Week

1st Reading: Isaiah 2:1-5

Responsorial Psalm: Ps 122:1-2, 3-4, 4-5, 6-7, 8-9

2nd Reading: Romans 13:11-14

Gospel: Matthew 24:37-44

1st Sunday of Advent



This Sunday marks the First Sunday of Advent and begins a new liturgical year. We start anew with the hope of our King's arrival. However, this week's gospel reading begins as Jesus speaks to His disciples about His second coming:

Jesus said to his disciples:

*"As it was in the days of Noah,
so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man.*

*In those days before the flood,
they were eating and drinking,
marrying and giving in marriage,
up to the day that Noah entered the ark.*

*They did not know until the flood came and
carried them all away.*

So will it be also at the coming of the Son of Man.

*Two men will be out in the field;
one will be taken, and one will be left.
Two women will be grinding at the mill;
one will be taken, and one will be left.*

Therefore, stay awake!

*For you do not know on which day your Lord will
come."*

This tone continues from that of last week's Gospel Reading as we celebrated Christ the King. Jesus continues to urge our preparation:

"Be sure of this: if the master of the house had known the hour of night when the thief was coming, he would have stayed awake and not let his house be broken into. So too, you also must be prepared, for at an hour you do not expect, the Son of Man will come."

What does this mean for those in recovery from addictions and unhealthy attachments? First, we must come to realize that nothing on this earth lasts, including the pleasures we've chased. As we find freedom from the primary source of our addictions or attachments, it can be easy to resort to other seemingly less destructive substances or behaviors as a substitute. Therefore, we gather together in general recovery meetings to understand the wholeness of our spiritual condition through the shared experience of our fellow brothers and sisters.

Furthermore, it is often the case that we must witness the collapse of our own kingdom before awakening to the Kingdom of God. In 12-step recovery, we refer to this as a *spiritual awakening*. It is through the realization of our own powerlessness that the Son of Man can stake claim of our lives.

Saint Paul makes the claim that each moment should be treated as our last. We can only meet God in the present, not in the past or the future. He alerts us in our Second Reading this week:

*Brothers and sisters:
You know the time;
it is the hour now for you to awake from sleep.
For our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed;
the night is advanced, the day is at hand.
Let us then throw off the works of darkness
and put on the armor of light;
let us conduct ourselves properly as in the day,
not in orgies and drunkenness,
not in promiscuity and lust,
not in rivalry and jealousy.
But put on the Lord Jesus Christ,
and make no provision for the desires of the flesh.*

The 12 steps of addiction recovery prepare us to stand before our Lord and structure our lives, one day at a time, to seek Him and His Kingdom for our ultimate fulfillment. The Power which we seek to direct our will and our lives is the same Power we seek as our Daily Bread—it is an enduring power that lasts.

This begins a season to shift our sights from the chaos of this passing world and the fleeting temptations of short-term satisfaction. Throughout Advent, we calibrate our focus to the Son of Man who reveals the love of God in our lives. We await our Lord's coming with hope and patience, knowing that His presence withstands whatever chaos we may experience in this life. As the Serenity Prayer suggests, we ask God that we may be reasonably happy in this life and supremely happy with Him forever in the next.