

Reflection Questions

- How have your pride and ego gotten in the way of seeking help from God and others?
 - What changed that prompted you to reach out for help?

- What value have you found in showing others who suffer how you've been able to find help?

- Are there barriers to you sharing the nature of your family's condition with another person?

Monthly Catholic in Recovery Newsletter

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- Monthly testimony from CIR participants
- New meeting announcements
- Resources and articles overlapping the 12 steps and the sacraments

Sunday Mass Readings This Week

1st Reading: Malachi 3:1-4

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 24:7, 8, 9, 10

2nd Reading: Hebrews 2:14-18

Gospel: Luke 2:22-40

Feast of the Presentation of the Lord



Stepping out of the darkness and into the light is an act that takes place when we willingly surrender ourselves—and our egos—to God. Once we recognize that *we* need recovery, this simply means being open to what is asked of us by our peers and others in recovery that have experienced freedom from the family disease of addiction. Becoming honest with ourselves, God, and others slowly becomes a new way of life as we set aside our own denial. Often, this means bringing the truth out of the darkness and into the light.

Facing the real impact of addiction on the family brings the necessary amount of motivation to continue on the journey. We find that our cross seems to lighten when we share with others the exact nature of what we're going through. Keep in mind, the presence of an addiction in your family is not a referendum on your character or status as a beloved son or daughter of God.

This week, we celebrate the Feast of the Presentation of the Lord, which honors the day when Jesus was ceremonially "presented" to God in the Temple in Jerusalem. For centuries, this feast day has been associated with light and the blessing of candles. The light that began to grow at Christmas is now 40 days old and is a light for everyone—woman and man, old and young, rich and poor, clergy and laypeople, addicted and non-addicted. This aligns with what we heard in last week's Gospel Reading:

*The people who sit in darkness have seen a great light;
on those dwelling in a land overshadowed by death,
light has arisen.*

This week's Gospel Reading shares the vision of two people—Simeon and Anna—who represent the powerless and those, like us, who are totally dependent on a power greater than themselves. The light of Christ reveals hope, which is confirmed in our Second Reading this week:

*[Jesus] had to become like his brothers and sisters
in every way,
that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest
before God
to expiate the sins of the people.
Because he himself was tested through what he
suffered,
he is able to help those who are being tested.*

God, who breathed life into the world and crafted each of us, takes an active role in our recovery. Jesus Christ, through his life, death, and resurrection, takes the burden of this transformation away from us and simply asks that we abandon our nets and follow him.

In many ways, there is a temptation to think that we need to make a little bit of progress on our own before we come to him for help. While it is true that God asks us to pick up the shovel while He moves mountains, our past experience reminds us that alcoholism and addiction are cunning, baffling, and powerful, and we need Him to be a part of the entire process.

Those that have found a personal relationship with Christ have done so in a way that maintains honesty through prayer. If we want to fill ourselves with more of Him, we will need to empty ourselves of expectations and some assumptions we've held prior to starting this journey.

There is an unusual amount of grace provided to us when we open the doors of honesty and humility, and Christ goes to great lengths to grant us freedom, one day at a time. Often, we need to see someone model it first. We can turn to scripture and the stories of others to see God being made known to us, just as his presentation in the Temple fulfilled the hope of those awaiting His light.