

12th Sunday in Ordinary Time



Healthy relationships are rooted in honesty—honesty with ourselves, with others, and with God. We might recognize the presence of our addiction or compulsive behaviors, but are we honest about the consequences of our actions and the division it creates? We find the important principle of honesty in every part of the twelve steps of addiction recovery and come to understand it as essential to fully participate in sacramental grace.

God's power and understanding of us has no limit. Adequate reflection can uncover moments in our lives when we tried hiding in the darkness from God who never stopped pursuing us. The relief of sharing honestly with others can offer spiritual energy to take action and surrender the situation to God. We admit we are powerless over addiction, make a thorough moral inventory of ourselves, seek willingness to honestly tackle character defects, get honest with others we've harmed, and share honestly with those we may be able to help as a result.

This way of life takes time and requires the support of someone we feel comfortable being honest with. Recovery meetings are a great platform to begin speaking openly about the events in our lives and can be a reliable place to find trusted individuals. Finding another person who has a foundation in recovery for a similar addiction is a crucial part of our spiritual journey and should set a tone of honesty that spreads to every area of life.

This week's Gospel Reading reveals the fullness of God's knowledge and love for us:

Jesus said to the Twelve:

"Fear no one.

Nothing is concealed that will not be revealed, nor secret that will not be known.

What I say to you in the darkness, speak in the light;

what you hear whispered, proclaim on the housetops.

And do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul;

rather, be afraid of the one who can destroy both soul and body in Gehenna.

Are not two sparrows sold for a small coin?

Yet not one of them falls to the ground without your Father's knowledge.

Even all the hairs of your head are counted.

So do not be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows.

The tone of Jesus in this reading runs parallel to a common expression in recovery—we are only as sick as our secrets. The things we hide from ourselves are the things that have the most power over us. Of course, we don't need to share everything with the whole world, but there should be at least one person we can disclose anything to.

Last week, we focused on the tenth step that keeps us close to Christ and on the right path, one day at a time. As we practice this daily inventory, we review our day to find if we've kept something to ourselves which should be discussed with another person at once. When we fail to take corrective action and, instead, resort to secret-keeping, we are setting ourselves on a slippery slope toward old, unhealthy behaviors. Recognition that we have slid back (which is bound to happen on some level quite often) creates an opportunity for continuous conversion.

There are many practical actions we can take to remain in a state of conversion, per the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*: "Conversion is accomplished in daily life by gestures of reconciliation, concern for the poor, exercise and defense of justice and right, by the admission of faults to one's brethren, fraternal correction, revision of life, examination of conscience, spiritual direction, acceptance of suffering, endurance of persecution for the sake of righteousness. Taking up one's cross each day and following Jesus is the surest way of penance" (1435).

- What experience do you have with the spiritual energy made available after finally getting honest with yourself, others, and God?
- Are you keeping something to yourself which should be discussed with another person at once?
- Referring to the list of practical actions to remain in a state of conversion, which have you found to be most beneficial?

Quick Teaching: What is a Sacrament?

We recognize that the sacraments have a visible and invisible reality, a reality open to all the human senses but grasped in its God-given depths with the eyes of faith. When parents hug their children, for example, the visible reality we see is the hug. The invisible reality the hug conveys is love. We cannot "see" the love the hug expresses, though sometimes we can see its nurturing effect in the child.

The visible reality we see in the sacraments is their outward expression, the form they take, and the way in which they are administered and received. The invisible reality we cannot "see" is God's grace—a free and loving gift. —USCCB

Sunday Mass Readings this Week

1st Reading: Jeremiah 20:10-13

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 69:8-10, 14, 17, 33-35

2nd Reading: Romans 5:12-15

Gospel: Matthew 10:26-33