

17th Sunday in Ordinary Time



In the rooms of 12-step recovery, we regularly hear that “half-measures avail us nothing.” This is a common phrase which describes that in order to find freedom from addiction, compulsions, or unhealthy attachments, we must be *all in*. This day-at-a-time commitment to discovering a new way of life and maintaining it is no different than the converted Christian who is now armed with a new spiritual understanding and fellowship that will support them along their path.

In yet another set of parables, Jesus sets a similar tone regarding the urgency of holding on to the treasure that God has freely given us. In this week’s Gospel Reading, we hear:

*"The kingdom of heaven is like a treasure buried in a field,
which a person finds and hides again,
and out of joy goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.
Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant searching for fine pearls.
When he finds a pearl of great price,
he goes and sells all that he has and buys it."*

Both the twelve steps of addiction recovery and the good news of Jesus Christ hinge upon some kind of *spiritual awakening*. It can be very useful to reflect upon the circumstances that led to this conversion. For some, the awakening took place in a confined, miraculous moment. Others may have experienced a gradual progression of spiritual understanding. Regardless, it is not to be taken for granted and the new sight we’re given needs to be regularly re-focused.

Addiction recovery focuses our efforts on what we can do today to participate in the grace that God provides us. In the first few days and weeks of recovery, that grace reveals itself in staving off the temptation and urge to drink, use drugs, act out lustfully, binge or restrict food, make one more wager, exert control, or indulge in other addictive/compulsive behaviors. As that obsession fades and we put on the armor of God, a day-at-a-time approach to recovery means that we ought to be practicing the principles gifted to us through the 12 steps and the sacraments on a daily basis.

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Surrender, prayer, honesty, righting wrongs, and helping others is the formula used to maintain a newly-found God consciousness. What is God consciousness? Jesus suggests it means selling all that you have to invest in a rare pearl that required some deep-diving to find. It can be understood as a heart that continues to desire interior conversion.

Challenges are sure to meet us as we stay engaged in the spiritual life. When they do, we seek grace rather than results. When we pray the Serenity Prayer, we do not ask for acceptance, change, and knowledge. Instead, we humbly request the serenity, courage, and wisdom to handle situations which used to baffle us. This provides an opportunity, once more, to express our intentions of “Thy will, not mine, be done.”

A Christ-centered life brings infinite blessings. Rather than seeing our quality of life as a condition of circumstances and situations around us, we begin turning inward and see that the quality of circumstances around us is typically dependent upon our ability to invite God into the situation. Addiction recovery gives us the hope, encouragement, and direction to get there.

- What has been your experience with a spiritual awakening?
- How do you maintain a daily commitment to recovery and a spiritual way of life?
- Can you relate to the 12-step promise that *we will intuitively know how to handle situations which used to baffle us?*

'Living the Steps' Meeting Coming Soon!

*Join the Catholic in Recovery community
as we journey through the 12 Steps together*

- Meeting will be held Monday nights at 8:00 PM ET/
5:00 PM PT beginning July 27, 2020
- Participate with others who are working through the 12 steps of addiction recovery through a sacramental lens
- We will read through sections of *The Twelve Steps and the Sacraments: A Catholic Journey through Recovery*
- Worksheets and other resources will be provided

Sunday Mass Readings this Week

1st Reading: 1 Kings 3:5, 7-12

Responsorial Psalm: Ps 119:57, 72, 76-77, 127-130

2nd Reading: Romans 8:28-30

Gospel: Matthew 13:44-52