

Reflection Questions

- What opportunities do you have to exercise patient trust in God and yourself?
- Describe how seeds of faith have been sown and grown within your heart since the presence of family addiction was revealed.
- What helps you navigate stages of instability and uncertainty?

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Sunday Mass Readings this Week

1st Reading: Ezekiel 17:22-24

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 92:2-3, 13-14, 15-16

2nd Reading: 2 Corinthians 5:6-10

Gospel: Mark 4:26-34

Eleventh Sunday in Ordinary Time



Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, French philosopher and Jesuit priest, shares a beautiful prayer on patient trust that is relevant for those of us who know the challenges of family addiction. It begins:

“Above all, trust in the slow work of God. We are quite naturally impatient in everything to reach the end without delay. We should like to skip the intermediate stages. We are impatient of being on the way to something unknown, something new.”

While recovery can provide hope and strength from the experience of others, we may find some disparity between where we are and where we want to be. Modern conveniences have conditioned us to expect things to come quickly and when we call for them. God’s kingdom works a bit differently, yet we can be sure that He has great plans for us if we remain patient with Him, ourselves, and others.

Jesus knows our natural human tendencies and speaks to our condition of impatience in this Sunday's Gospel Reading:

*“To what shall we compare the kingdom of God,
Or what parable can we use for it?
It is like a mustard seed that, when it is sown in the
ground,
is the smallest of all the seeds on the earth.
But once it is sown, it springs up and becomes the
largest of plants
and puts forth large branches,
so that the birds of the sky can dwell in its shade.”*

It is wise of us to recall moments in our journey where the seeds of faith were sown and watered. Even when things have not gone the way we planned, God keeps calling us back to Him in order to consider a better way. It's prudent that we allow the same for those we love. In recovery, it might feel like we are regressing as we engage in self-discovery, form new patterns, and clean up our own side of the street. However, with awareness comes opportunity.

The initial stages of our journey can seem hard as we acquire new faith. As these seeds germinate, some inevitable growing pains will arise. This might distract us from the wondrous things God is doing within us! Teilhard de Chardin continues to note:

*“And yet it is the law of all progress
that it is made by passing through
some stages of instability—
and that it may take a very long time.”*

Where have you noticed yourself progressing since beginning your recovery journey? Have others mentioned that they have seen a change take place in you? Often, others can see the not-so-subtle changes in us before we can even notice them ourselves. In other moments, we may have to be mindful of the expectations we set on ourselves and others, knowing that God has a plan for each of us.

Pierre Teilhard de Chardin wraps up this topic, continuing to offer words of liberation and hope:

*"And so I think it is with you;
your ideas mature gradually—let them grow,
let them shape themselves, without undue haste.
Don't try to force them on,
as though you could be today what time
(that is to say, grace and circumstances acting on
your own good will)
will make of you tomorrow.
Only God could say what this new spirit
gradually forming within you will be.
Give Our Lord the benefit of believing
that his hand is leading you,
and accept the anxiety of feeling yourself
in suspense and incomplete."*