

Reflection Questions

- How have you experienced freedom in your pursuit of recovery?
 - Does freedom mean something different to you now than it has in the past?
- How is God calling you to be of service to others?
- How do you stay connected to fellow group members and others in recovery outside of meetings?

Being of Service in Catholic in Recovery

Service to others is an essential part of recovery and making progress in the spiritual life. Here are a few ways to be of service in CIR or other recovery groups:

- Attend meetings regularly
- Offer your phone number to another member
- Drive someone to a meeting
- Take a service position
- Co-facilitate a virtual meeting
- Stay after the meeting & connect with a newcomer

Sunday Mass Readings this Week

1st Reading: 1 Kings 19:16b, 19-21

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 16:1-2, 5, 7-8, 9-10, 11

2nd Reading: Galatians 5:1, 13-18

Gospel: Luke 9:51-62

Thirteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time



Christian freedom involves *freedom from* fear and control so that we may find *freedom to* carry out the will of God. Addiction holds the entire family captive. We've tried asserting ourselves and we've tried pulling back, finding it nearly impossible to hold a healthy balance between the two. Family recovery offers an opportunity to serve and be served by others who have been through similar experiences and can do so without judgment.

This theme is explored in the readings this Sunday as we hear Saint Paul express in the Second Reading:

*For you were called for freedom, brothers and sisters.
But do not use this freedom
as an opportunity for the flesh;
rather, serve one another through love.
For the whole law is fulfilled in one statement,
namely, You shall love your neighbor as yourself.
But if you go on biting and devouring one another,
beware that you are not consumed by one another.*

Upon recognizing the lack of power we have over alcohol and addiction by working Step One, we put our faith in the infinite power of God to do for us what we cannot do for ourselves. We surrender our will and lives over to His care through prayer and by following the guidance of others. A good sponsor will suggest we commit to service by helping out at meetings and reaching out to newcomers instead of ruminating on people, places, and things we can't control.

We can only be of service to those who want our help. Therefore, when we speak of service in family recovery, we must be very clear that we are referring to serving others who are impacted by a loved one's addiction, not offering unsolicited help to manage the lives of our loved ones. Chapter 9 of the Big Book is titled The Family Afterward and speaks to the experiences of families devastated by addiction, acknowledging the value of our experience and our unique ability to help others:

"This painful past may be of infinite value to other families still struggling with their problem. We think each family which has been relieved owes something to those who have not, and when the occasion requires, each member of it should be only too willing to bring former mistakes, no matter how grievous, out of their hiding places. Showing others who suffer how we were given help is the very thing which makes life seem so worth while to us now. Cling to the thought that, in God's hands, the dark past is the greatest possession you have—the key to life and happiness for others. With it you can avert death and misery for them" (*Alcoholics Anonymous*, p. 124).

People with addictive tendencies, as well as those who are impacted by a loved one's addiction, tend to take things to the extreme. When we find ourselves wrapped up in either self-pity or grandiose thinking, a phone call to another person in recovery can quickly help realign our attitude and behavior. In addition to putting things into perspective and slowing down enough to process what might seem overwhelming, reaching out to others opens us to the work that God would have us perform.

With this new attitude and outlook, we slowly begin to find ourselves obsessing less and empathizing more. The role of victim fades while gratitude for what God is doing through us rises. Whether a few days, months, years, or decades into our own recovery, we realize that the best way to maintain *freedom from* the effects of addiction is by exercising our *freedom to* know, love, and serve God and others.