

Seventeenth Sunday in Ordinary Time



The Twelve Steps of addiction recovery are ordered in a way that allows us to have deep and effective spiritual experiences, shaping the way we view ourselves, our fellows, and our God. God enters our hearts and reveals what has been there all along—the presence of the Holy Spirit.

This theme is woven throughout Saint Paul's Letter to the Colossians as we hear in this Sunday's Second Reading:

*Brothers and sisters,
You were buried with him in baptism,
in which you were also raised with him through faith
in the power of God,
who raised him from the dead.
And even when you were dead
in transgressions and the uncircumcision of your
flesh,
he brought you to life along with him,
having forgiven us all our transgressions;*

Coming to grips with the fact that we are powerless over lust addiction, sexual compulsions, and other unhealthy attachments positions us to seek help beyond human aid. Being convinced that our lives had become unmanageable prompts the need for something far greater than ourselves if we are to have a lasting psychic change. For some, this means enlarging the concept we have of God and experiencing the fruit of forgiveness through our kinship in His kingdom.

While the Twelve Steps guide us to a spiritual awakening, the Lord's Prayer is our request for God to order our lives in a way that centers around Him. Prayer is not an attempt to change God's will, but rather a request for God to bend our will toward His. Jesus teaches us to honor God above all things through prayer as we say "Hallowed be Thy name."

We plea for His kingdom, which, as painted by the life and ministry of Jesus, is all-inclusive, peaceful, compassionate, and full of forgiveness. Through aligning our will to God's, we pray that we might be advocates for God's kingdom as He shapes our attitude and behavior. In order to maintain His presence in our lives and the world, we ask for our daily bread—the very body and blood of Jesus which offers divine substance for our journey.

Forgiveness is an act of repairing broken relationships and is central to both the Twelve Steps and the spiritual traditions of the Church. As we are forgiven by God, we extend forgiveness and healing to others. In the Steps, we do this by making a moral inventory of ourselves, sharing it with God and our sponsor, and making amends to those we've harmed.

Reflection Questions

This Sunday's Gospel Reading provides insight into how God cares for us. Upon teaching his disciples the Lord's Prayer, Jesus interprets the Father's mercy and generosity:

*"And I tell you, ask and you will receive;
seek and you will find;
knock and the door will be opened to you.
For everyone who asks, receives;
and the one who seeks, finds;
and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened.
What father among you would hand his son a snake
when he asks for a fish?
Or hand him a scorpion when he asks for an egg?"*

There are a variety of internal and external obstacles that make it difficult to accept that God accepts us. We are made in the image and likeness of God, but too often we envision God through the limits of our own image and likeness. While stepping into the stream of acceptance, we would be wise to integrate the essence of the Lord's Prayer into our daily lives as we work through the steps and seek recovery, one day at a time.

- What parts of the Lord's Prayer stand out to you as you consider it through the lens of your recovery?
- What helps you accept the abundant mercy and generosity of God?
- What spiritual routines, prayers, or exercises help you order your life around God?

Catholic in Recovery Retreats

Find a Catholic in Recovery retreat near you or inquire about hosting one in your community

- CIR retreats offers time and space to deepen your recovery through personal testimonies, engaging the sacraments, CIR meetings, talks, and fellowship
- Remaining 2022 weekend retreats will be held in Akron, OH (Aug 19-21), Newton, NJ (Sept 23-25), and Wichita, KS (Nov 4-6)
- Register today at catholicinrecovery.com/events

Sunday Mass Readings this Week

First Reading: Genesis 18:20-32

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 138:1-2, 2-3, 6-7, 7-8

Second Reading: Colossians 2:12-14

Gospel: Luke 11:1-13