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I was reading an article not long ago where it says there is a sizeable number of people in our society caught up in a cycle of dependency on various things. I've seen where 3 to 4 billion pounds was spent last year from the Social Security budget on people with various addictions. That could be better spent on the NHS.

Of course the gospel today is also about dependency - not on man but on God. Just as little children rely completely on their parents, so in the same way we must rely solely on God. God can help wrench us away from dependence on things which can do us harm. He says: "come to me all you who are overburdened and I will give rest to your souls". We have His word for it.

The more we believe in God, the easier it to believe in ourselves. God has endowed us with unique gifts which are meant to be utilised. Think of the parable of the talents. I will be incapable of developing those God-given talents if I lack self-control due to compulsions of one kind or another. We're told these days that it's so easy to become enslaved to social media, for instance. If I'm hooked on this I limit my freedom to develop other areas of my life.

Some people become dependent even on sinful habits. When St Augustine gave up his life of impurity the demons tormented him by whispering in his ear: 'are you sure you can live without us'. He proved the demons wrong. The question we could ask is: what demons can we not live without? Could it be overwork, or wine, or telly, or shopping, or social media or God knows what.

Last evening in the hall we had a lovely talk on 'walking the Camino' which is a 900 mile walk and can take five or six weeks to complete. There you get away from everything you're

normally accustomed to and your mind is freed and relaxed. You just focus on each day's walk. He said you would be surprised by the number of people who, through the Camino experience, have broken free from things in their lives they thought they could never do without. It was a wonderful liberating experience for them.

When Jesus said that the mysteries of the kingdom were revealed to mere children, he knew that children find happiness in the simple things of life. Parents or grandparents should not worry about the children going without things which are often aggressively advertised as a 'must have' for their age group. In good faith, parents can inadvertently sow the seeds of unhealthy needs in their children. Our aim should be to live simple uncomplicated lives. Pope Francis is leading the way for the Church in this regard. St Theresa of Avila who lived in the 16th century puts things into proper perspective with these words:

Let nothing disturb you, Let nothing frighten you, All things pass; God only is changeless. Whoever has God wants for nothing. God alone suffices.