

5th Sunday of Lent



Death no longer has the last word. The Paschal Mystery—Christ’s passion, death, resurrection, and ascension—brings salvation to the world. Dying has a way of bringing about new life, which we get an opportunity to experience in a very real way through our personal recovery journey. Thus, we can see the Paschal Mystery playing out in both large and small ways every day.

As the time of His own death was approaching, Jesus gathered a few of His disciples and described the necessary components for life to be sustained. That is, in order for life to be preserved, death must be embraced. In order for life to be eternal, Christ’s death must be embraced. We want the resurrection, but are we willing to walk through the passion?

This Sunday's Gospel Reading declares:

The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified.

*Amen, amen, I say to you,
unless a grain of wheat falls to the ground and dies,
it remains just a grain of wheat;
but if it dies, it produces much fruit.
Whoever loves his life loses it,
and whoever hates his life in this world
will preserve it for eternal life.*

The season of Lent is a great opportunity to recognize the things in our lives that we are holding on to and perhaps unwilling to let go of—or let die. This might be a secret that’s being kept from others in order to avoid some humiliation. It might be a habit that is no longer serving you but brings some very brief comfort (if only to dull a craving). Maybe there is a relationship in your life that you have been clinging on to tightly, preventing you from seeing harmful aspects of it.

Resentment, fear, dishonesty, and self-centeredness are barriers to truly living out the Paschal Mystery. We explore these spiritual road blocks throughout the process of working the twelve steps and seek the sacramental life as a way of regularly turning toward the grace of Christ.

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Many have found it helpful to chronicle God's grace on a regular basis. Doing this through a daily practice of self-reflection can set a pattern for courageously expressing a true desire to follow Christ. At all times, we continue to watch for selfishness, dishonesty, resentment, and fear. When these crop up we:

- ask God at once to remove them
- discuss them with someone immediately
- make amends quickly if we have harmed anyone
- resolutely turn our thoughts to someone we can help

We listen to others share how God has entered their lives and made freedom from addiction possible, which provides hope that we might experience the same. Realizing the spiritual growth that has come from our previous efforts to surrender can also make the challenges of today less intimidating. When a grain of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it is no longer just a grain of wheat.

- How have you personally experienced life, death, and resurrection as part of your journey through recovery?
- What are you unwilling to let go of—or let die—that acts as a barrier between you and God?
- What benefits do you experience by committing to a daily examen/tenth step inventory?

Catholic in Recovery Resources Online

Visit catholicinrecovery.com for a variety of resources related to recovery and the Catholic Church

- Blog articles published each week related to various types of addiction, topics related to recovery, and practical experiences with the twelve steps and sacraments
- Full meeting directory with a variety of virtual and in-person meetings available
- Testimonials from CIR participants and opportunities to engage community

Sunday Mass Readings this Week

1st Reading: Jeremiah 31:31-34

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 51:3-4, 12-13, 14-15

2nd Reading: Hebrews 5:7-9

Gospel: John 12:20-33