

Third Sunday of Easter



Easter is not simply a day to celebrate Jesus' Resurrection but a season that lasts 50 days and invites us to enter into the fullness of God's mystery. We put our faith in a Higher Power that has been raised from the dead, glorified, and resurrected. This has nothing to do with ghosts, mythology, wish-fulfillment, or disembodied spirits. It is much more than an abstraction of good will, kindness, and respect.

Our recovery from addictions, compulsions, and other unhealthy attachments requires engagement with more than a ghost. Like the disciples encountering Jesus after the Resurrection, we get support from God who dwells among us today. We get a personal encounter with Jesus by relying on others, the body of Christ living and breathing in the world. We get direct contact with our Lord through the sacraments that heal and nourish us along the way.

We have an Advocate above, continually knitting the fabric of heaven and earth together. In recovery, we rely on the body of Christ in order to turn away from our destructive attachments and devote ourselves to spiritual progress. Along the way, we begin to truly love God with all our heart, mind, and soul.

As Easter people, we rejoice in our risen Lord but shall not forget the pain and sacrifice experienced by Jesus for the sake of our own resurrection and freedom from death. As we commit to a program of recovery, one day or moment at a time, we may acknowledge the pain brought on by our condition over many years—oftentimes in the form of mental, emotional, and spiritual anguish.

In many cases, we have been conditioned to avoid small moments of suffering by acting out or reaching for our drug of choice. Addiction forms when these coping patterns remove the personal choices that we have, making our lives unmanageable and diminishing our ability to love God, ourselves, or our neighbor. Acting against the grain of our addictive impulses is a difficult but necessary part in trusting that God will restore us to sanity.

We can see this transformation take place in the lives of the disciples. Peter wanted a Christ without the cross and denied him three times before his death. We will see Peter awaken to the will of God as we journey with the apostles throughout the Easter Season. His own faith helped convert thousands in just one day.

At the cusp of his awakening, however, Peter had an amends to make:

*When they had finished breakfast,
Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon, son of John,
do you love me more than these?"
Simon Peter answered him,
"Yes, Lord, you know that I love you."
Jesus said to him, "Feed my lambs."
He then said to Simon Peter a second time,
"Simon, son of John, do you love me?"
Simon Peter answered him,
"Yes, Lord, you know that I love you."
Jesus said to him, "Tend my sheep."
Jesus said to him the third time,
"Simon, son of John, do you love me?"
Peter was distressed that Jesus had said to him a
third time,
"Do you love me?" and he said to him,
"Lord, you know everything;
you know that I love you."
Jesus said to him, "Feed my sheep."*

We see the fruit of Peter's recovery when he is face-to-face with the same authorities who had previously frightened him to betray Jesus. Emboldened by a second chance to love and serve his Lord, Peter accepts his mission and shares the good news with others, regardless of the cost.

By facing the truth and accepting the path ahead of us, we are given a similar opportunity to care for ourselves and others in a new way while aligning ourselves with God's will, even if it does not come easily.

Reflection Questions

- How do you rely on God's help in order to deal with moments of temptation and suffering?
- Describe how you have come to accept hardship as the pathway to peace rather than turning to addictive substances and compulsive behaviors in the midst of suffering and temptation.
- How has Jesus given you a second chance at life?

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Sunday Mass Readings this Week

First Reading: Acts 2:14, 22-33

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

Second Reading: 1 Peter 1:17-21

Gospel: Luke 24:13-35