

**Seventh Sunday of Easter/
Ascension of the Lord**



Jesus spent significant time journeying with his disciples before approaching his fateful death. Over the course of three years, twelve ordinary individuals were called by name, taught by Jesus, shared meals together, and witnessed our Lord offer tender healing to those who sought him. They knew him because they spent time with him, not because they were theologians or biblical scholars.

Throughout the Easter season, we journey with the apostles and first disciples, giving us an opportunity to see the Holy Spirit working through a group of men and women who were touched by Jesus. Peter turned his back on Christ before he was crucified but had a radical conversion of spirit and went on to lead many to Christianity. We can see our own path woven through the stories of the apostles who, after having a firsthand encounter with Jesus, were filled with joy, freedom, and hope.

We can learn much from the apostles' eagerness to serve. In doing so, we make ourselves available to our brothers and sisters looking for a spark of hope and freedom from lust addiction, sexual compulsions, and unhealthy attachments. The apostles were bold and confident in their experience as they brought the faith to all corners of the globe.

This year we celebrate the Ascension of the Lord on Thursday, May 18 and will hear Jesus tell his disciples:

*"All power in heaven and on earth has been given to me.
Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations,
baptizing them in the name of the Father,
and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit,
teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you.
And behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age."*

This mirrors the spirit of Step Twelve and the calling of those who have had a spiritual awakening as a result of the Twelve Steps. We are called to share a message of hope with others by participating in meetings, connecting with our peers between meetings, taking on commitments to serve the group, offering to be a sponsor and guide others through the steps, or by accompanying newcomers to other fellowships for lust addiction recovery. Never underestimate your ability to hold the addict who still suffers.

In their book *The Spirituality of Imperfection*, Ernest Kurtz and Katherine Ketcham attempt to describe the unique nature of relationships in recovery by noting, "In relationships of mutuality we give by getting and get by giving, recognizing that we truly gain only what we seek to give and that we are able to give only that which we are seeking to gain" (p. 83).

Whether we are embarking upon our first weeks of recovery or counting years, we get an opportunity to return to the truth in God's word. In our recovery from lust addiction, we get the unique chance to experience a past that keeps us propelled toward a brighter future. We know the depths and darkness of what the world has to offer. We also get to know the blessings that our King wants to give us in abundance.

God is our answer. As faithful Catholics, we get to experience Him in the sacraments of healing and forgiveness. He surrounds us in the body of Christ that makes up our fellowship. We are in the world but not of the world, and we can make a home here while remaining in God and seeking to do His will. As C.S. Lewis noted, "Aim at heaven and you will get earth 'thrown in': aim at earth and you get neither" (*Mere Christianity*, p. 134).

Reflection Questions

- How does a healthy remembrance of the past keep you committed to recovery and doing the will of God?
- How do you remain of service to others in recovery? What impact does it have on your life?
- What does it mean for you to develop the appropriate attitude and behavior for living this particular day successfully?

CIR Retreat at the Shrine of the Most Blessed Sacrament in Hanceville, Alabama
Registration is nearly full for the retreat held June 2-4

- **Engage the sacraments** with confession, Mass and Adoration
- **Personal testimonies** of individuals and families with a variety of experiences related addiction recovery
- **Multiple CIR meetings** to be held during the weekend
- **Sacred setting** for personal prayer and meditation time
- **Private tour** of the Shrine and JP II Eucharistic Center
- **Register today** at www.catholicinrecovery.com/events

Sunday Mass Readings this Week

First Reading: Acts 1:12-14

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 27:1, 4, 7-8

Second Reading: 1 Peter 4:13-16

Gospel: John 17:1-11a