

This Easter season has gradually revealed the heart of recovery in Christ. We have reflected on how the risen Lord meets us in fear, walks with us in confusion, leads us as our Good Shepherd, reveals Himself as the way forward, places His Spirit within us, and sends us forth with purpose. Pentecost brings that journey to its fulfillment, as the promised Holy Spirit descends upon the apostles and transforms a fearful, uncertain group of disciples into a bold and Spirit-filled Church.

The first reading from Acts of the Apostles describes the moment vividly (Acts 2:1-11): *“And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in different tongues, as the Spirit enabled them to proclaim.”* The same disciples who had once hidden behind locked doors now step forward with courage, clarity, and conviction. Something profound has changed within them—not by their own power, but by the power of God alive within them.

This is a meaningful image for those of us in recovery. Many of us entered recovery spiritually exhausted, emotionally wounded, and uncertain that change was possible. We may have arrived carrying shame, fear, resentment, or a deep sense of isolation. Like the disciples, we knew something needed to change, but we did not know how to bring that change about on our own.

Recovery often begins with surrender—with admitting that our own strength is not enough. Yet over time, something new begins to take root. We find ourselves becoming more honest, more willing, and more open to grace. We begin to experience moments of peace where there was once turmoil, connection where there was once isolation, and hope where there was once despair. This is more than behavior modification. It is spiritual transformation.

The Twelve Steps call this a spiritual awakening. The Church calls it life in the Spirit. While the language may differ, the experience is very familiar: God doing within us what we could not do for ourselves.

One of the most beautiful signs of Pentecost is that people from many nations hear the apostles speaking in their own language. Diversity remains, yet understanding becomes possible. This also reflects the grace found in recovery meetings. We come from different backgrounds, carry different wounds, and struggle with different compulsions or attachments. Yet when someone shares honestly about pain, surrender, grace, and healing, something in us recognizes the truth. We understand one another at a deeper level because suffering, humility, and hope speak a common language.

This kind of fellowship is sacred. When we gather honestly, pray together, and make room for truth, the Holy Spirit is active among us. We often think of miracles as dramatic moments, but perhaps one of the most powerful miracles is watching hearts soften, shame lose its grip, relationships heal, and broken lives begin to reflect new life in Christ.

The story of modern recovery carries traces of this same Spirit-led movement. When Father Ed Dowling, a Jesuit priest deeply influenced by the Spiritual Exercises of Saint Ignatius, reached out to Bill Wilson, he helped encourage a deeper spiritual understanding of the Twelve Steps. This friendship became one of many signs that God was weaving together grace, recovery, and spiritual awakening in ways still bearing fruit today.

Pentecost reminds us that the Holy Spirit is not merely an idea or symbol. He is alive and active. He comforts, convicts,

strengthens, and guides. He gives us courage to speak truth, humility to ask for help, and love to serve others.

As we celebrate Pentecost, we are invited to remember that recovery is not fueled by willpower alone. The Spirit of God is alive within us and at work among us. What once felt impossible becomes possible through grace. We are no longer alone, and we are no longer powerless before the darkness that once consumed us. The Holy Spirit is leading us into freedom, one faithful day at a time.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- When have you recognized signs of spiritual transformation taking place in your recovery, even in small ways?
- How has fellowship helped you experience truth, understanding, or hope in ways that surprised you?
- What helps you remain open to the Holy Spirit’s guidance in your daily recovery journey?

MASS READINGS

FIRST READING Acts 2:1-11

RESP. PS. Psalm 104:1, 24, 29-30, 31, 34

SECOND READING 1 Corinthians 12:3b-7, 12-13

GOSPEL John 20:19-23