

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 recovering from the wounds of dysfunctional family systems. Many of us entered recovery emotionally exhausted, spiritually discouraged, and uncertain that meaningful change was possible. We may have arrived carrying fear, shame, confusion, grief, perfectionism, people-pleasing, emotional distance, 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 old survival patterns are no longer serving us and that our own efforts to control life have left us weary. Yet over time, something new begins to take root. We become more honest, more willing, and more open to grace. We begin to experience peace where there was once anxiety, connection where there

was once isolation, and hope where there was once despair. This is more than learning healthier habits. 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 families, carry different wounds, and developed different coping patterns, yet when someone speaks honestly about fear, shame, surrender, healing, and learning to live truthfully, 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. One of the quiet miracles of recovery is watching shame lose its grip, unhealthy patterns begin to soften, and wounded hearts grow in freedom, courage, and peace.

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 live honestly, humility to receive support, and love that teaches us new ways of relating to ourselves, God, and others.

As we celebrate Pentecost, we are invited to remember that healing 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 wounds, fear, or false beliefs that once shaped our lives. The Holy Spirit is leading us into freedom, one faithful day at a time.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- When have you noticed the Holy Spirit bringing healing, clarity, or courage into areas that once felt stuck?

- How has fellowship helped you feel understood, supported, or less alone in your healing journey?

- What old patterns or beliefs might the Holy Spirit be inviting you to release so new life can take root?

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