

Fifth Sunday of Lent



Death no longer has the last word. The Paschal Mystery – Jesus Christ's passion, death, resurrection, and ascension – has brought 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 witness the Paschal Mystery playing out every day in significant and subtle ways.

As his own death was approaching, Jesus gathered a few of his disciples and described the necessary components to sustain life. That is, for life to be preserved, death must be embraced. For our lives to be eternal, we must embrace Christ's death. 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 ripe opportunity to recognize the things in our lives that we are holding on to and perhaps unwilling to let go of or let die. There might be a secret that's being kept from others 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 or unhealthy aspects of it.

Resentment, fear, dishonesty, and self-centeredness are barriers to truly living out the Paschal Mystery. We explore these spiritual roadblocks while working through the Twelve Steps and seeking the sacramental life as a way of regularly turning toward the grace of Jesus Christ.

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 arise 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.

In recovery meetings, we listen to others share how God has entered their lives and is freeing them from the darkness of addiction, providing us hope that we might experience the same. Realizing the spiritual growth that has come from past 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. When we let go of the source of our enslavement, God allows it to be used for our salvation.

Reflection Questions

- How have you experienced life, death, and resurrection in your personal journey through addiction and recovery?
- What are you letting go of—or letting die—that has acted as a barrier between you and God?
- What benefits do you experience by conducting a daily examen, tenth-step inventory, or other form of guided self-reflection?

Additional Resources Available Online

Find life-saving addiction recovery resources that blend 12-step spirituality with Catholic faith

- Stay updated on events, opportunities, and resources by signing up for the CIR monthly newsletter
- Explore virtual CIR meetings and prayer groups
- Find information about starting a new CIR group
- Shop for books, meeting materials, and merchandise
- Read testimonies and articles on important topics
- Visit **www.catholicinrecovery.com** today

Sunday Mass Readings this Week

First Reading: Jeremiah 31:31-34

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

Second Reading: Hebrews 5:7-9

Gospel: John 12:20-33