

7th 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 Christ, 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, the first readings in our liturgies are taken from Acts of the Apostles, giving us an opportunity to see the Holy Spirit working through a group of men and women who were empowered by Christ. Peter, who turned his back on Jesus as he was being put to death, had a radical conversion of spirit and led 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.

It is prudent that we learn from the apostles' eagerness to serve as we make ourselves available to our brothers and sisters desperate for hope and freedom from the bondage of lust addiction. Spending time in scripture, we can see how the apostles' boldness brought Christian faith to all corners of the globe.

We celebrate the Ascension of the Lord this Sunday, hearing Jesus tell his disciples, "Go into the whole world and proclaim the gospel to every creature" (Mark 16:15). The Gospel reading for the Seventh Sunday of Easter, set just prior to Jesus' arrest, will be read in many parishes around the world. Listen as our Lord beautifully invokes his prayer to the Father before giving over his earthly freedom:

*Lifting up his eyes to heaven, Jesus prayed saying:
"Now I am coming to you.
I speak this in the world
so that they may share my joy completely.
I gave them your word, and the world hated them,
because they do not belong to the world
any more than I belong to the world.
I do not ask that you take them out of the world
but that you keep them from the evil one.
They do not belong to the world
any more than I belong to the world.
Consecrate them in the truth. Your word is truth.
As you sent me into the world,
so I sent them into the world.
And I consecrate myself for them,
so that they also may be consecrated in truth."*

Whether embarking upon our first month of recovery or counting decades, we get an opportunity to return to the truth that is God's word. In our recovery from lust addiction, sexual compulsions, and other unhealthy attachments, we get the unique opportunity to experience a past that keeps us moving toward a brighter future. We know the depths and darkness of what the world has to offer, and today we choose a life rooted in Christ.

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. While doing so, we hope to share in Christ's joy completely.

Reflection Questions

- How has 12-step recovery helped you form a personal relationship with Jesus Christ?
- How has desperation fueled your recovery and how do you remain committed when that desperation fades?
- How do you experience hope, freedom, and joy in recovery? Contrast that with your experience in active addiction.

Catholic in Recovery Novena

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- Receive a reflection and prayer in your inbox for nine days
- Journey with the intercession of St. Jude, St. Monica, St. Joseph, St. Augustine and other saints related to addiction recovery
- Register today by visiting **catholicinrecovery.com/cir-novena**

Sunday Mass Readings this Week

First Reading: Acts 1:1-11

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 47:2-3, 6-7, 8-9

Second Reading: Ephesians 1:17-23

Gospel: Mark 16:15-20