

Fifth Sunday of Easter



During the season of Easter, the first readings in the Catholic liturgy are taken from the Acts of the Apostles, bearing witness to the growth of the early Church. Similarly, we turn to the Book of Revelation – the final book of the Bible – for the source of our second readings during this time. In the Book of Revelation, we find John’s prophetic writing that looks forward to the hope of eternal glory awaiting us. Rather than casting a dark cloud on the future, John’s shared vision captures the hope that awaits us in recovery.

In this Sunday’s second reading, we hear the vision of a new heaven and a new earth:

*I heard a loud voice from the throne saying,
“Behold, God’s dwelling is with the human race.
He will dwell with them and they will be his people
and God himself will always be with them as their
God.
He will wipe every tear from their eyes,
and there shall be no more death or mourning,
wailing or pain,
for the old order has passed away.”
The One who sat on the throne said,
“Behold, I make all things new.”*

It might be challenging for the newcomer to see this vision through the mask of shame and fear. There is a tendency for all of us to believe – or at least portray – that we have things completely figured out. Below the surface of this idea lies the truth that we need the aid of God and a fellowship of others walking a similar path.

Like those carrying the message of recovery, Paul and Barnabas traveled from town to town to share their experience, strength, and hope. They noted the marvelous things that Jesus has done and proclaimed a message of new life that is available to all who are willing to hear it. For those shackled by addictions, compulsions, and unhealthy attachments, this is very good news. God has always journeyed with us, and when we surrender our will to Him, He makes all things new.

Without the support of God and others, we will be challenged to overcome the emotional highs and lows without the aid of our old, addictive behavior. In recovery, we are certain to face trials and temptations. The circumstances around us will not always change, but the way we respond to them will improve if we can adopt new spiritual tools and become willing to accept hardship as the pathway to peace. This is also the message of the apostles who built the Church, as found in this Sunday's first reading:

They strengthened the spirits of the disciples and exhorted them to persevere in the faith, saying, "It is necessary for us to undergo many hardships to enter the kingdom of God."

Jesus is the essence of "a new freedom and a new happiness," which is promised in 12-step recovery (*Alcoholics Anonymous*, p. 83). He offers a new commandment to His followers: "As I have loved you, so you also should love one another" (John 13:34).

Both the Twelve Steps of recovery and the sacramental life of the Church prepare a path that requires us to give away what we freely find. We undergo intense spiritual growth and progress, one day at a time, so that we may learn to lay down our lives in love. Self-sacrifice does not happen automatically, but if we remain connected to the process, we will find immense purpose while being amazed by a new heaven and a new earth.

Reflection Questions

- What parts of your life has God made new through recovery, even if your circumstances haven't changed?
- How have you experienced hardship as the pathway to peace? Share how you persevered through difficult moments in recovery to remain free.
- How is God inviting you to love others as He has loved you—especially in areas where self-protection, pride, or fear once held you back?

May is the Month of Mary

Deepen your relationship with Jesus through our Blessed Mother with the aid of 'The Recovery Rosary'

- Meditations for individuals and families affected by addictions, compulsions, and unhealthy attachments
- Personalized reflections by CIR community members with various addictions including family members in recovery
- Great for individual use or in a group setting
- Get your copy today at catholicinrecovery.com/store or wherever books are sold
- CIR+ subscribers get 20% off this and most other items

Sunday Mass Readings this Week

First Reading: Acts 14:21-27

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 145:8-9, 10-11, 12-13

Second Reading: Revelation 21:1-5a

Gospel: John 13:31-33a, 34-35