

Solemnity of the 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 men walked beside him, listened to his teachings, and received his healing touch. Their transformation didn't come from mastering rules or avoiding failure—it came from relationship. For those of us recovering from lust addiction, this journey resonates deeply. We sought escape, control, and comfort in lust. Now, we are being reformed through real connection—with God, others, and ourselves.

The Acts of the Apostles, proclaimed during the Easter season, offers a vision of what is possible when we surrender to the Holy Spirit. Peter, who once fled in shame, became a courageous leader of the early Church. Many of us know the weight of shame—secret behaviors, broken promises, isolation. But as we practice rigorous honesty and entrust our lives to God, we are being made new. What once enslaved us no longer has power when we live in the light.

Lust addiction distorts our capacity to love and be loved. In recovery, we learn to restore sexual desire to its proper place—aligned with chastity, respect, and sacred dignity. As we work the Twelve Steps and encounter Christ through the sacraments, our false dependencies begin to break apart. We stop using others to fill a spiritual void. We open ourselves to intimacy built on trust and truth.

This Sunday, we celebrate the Ascension of the Lord. The Gospel captures the final earthly moments between Jesus and his disciples (Luke 24:50–53):

*Then he led them out as far as Bethany,
raised his hands, and blessed them.
As he blessed them he parted from them
and was taken up to heaven.
They did him homage
and then returned to Jerusalem with great joy,
and they were continually in the temple praising
God.*

Christ's departure did not leave his followers desolate. It filled them with purpose and joy. In recovery, we may fear abandonment—but God never leaves us. He blesses us and calls us to live in joyful purity, not as a burden, but as a path to freedom. His grace is sufficient to overcome lust and to teach us how to love rightly, as sons and daughters of the Father.

Whether in our first days of sobriety or years into the journey, we walk with others who support our growth in virtue. We resist temptation not through willpower alone, but through daily surrender and the strength of fellowship. Christ's blessing echoes in our lives as we choose freedom over fantasy, and truth over secrecy. We look forward with hope to the fullness of joy he promises.

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- How have you experienced God's grace replacing lust with deeper connection or purpose?
- 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 lust addiction, sexual compulsion, or unhealthy attachments.

Attend a CIR Retreat this Year

Renew & Strengthen your recovery, enliven your faith, and connect with fellow CIR community members

- June 7: Oconomowoc, WI - Redemptorist Retreat Center
- June 21-22: Hanceille, AL - Shrine of the Most Blessed Sacrament
- October 17-19: Menlo Park, CA - Vallombrosa Center
- Experience healing through the sacraments, personal testimonies, CIR meetings, workshops, and fellowship
- **Find more information and register at www.catholicinrecovery.com/events**

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First Reading: Acts 1:1-11

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

Second Reading: Ephesians 1:17-23

Gospel: Luke 24:46-53