

THE ASCENSION OF THE LORD / SEVENTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

Throughout this Easter season, we have reflected on how the risen Christ meets us in fear, walks with us in confusion, leads us as our Good Shepherd, reveals Himself as the way forward, and places His Spirit within us. This week, the Easter journey turns outward. In many dioceses, the Church celebrates the Ascension of the Lord on this Sunday, while others observe it on Thursday. In either case, we are invited into the same mystery: Christ ascends to the Father, not to leave us behind, but to send us forward.

This is an important truth for those recovering from the wounds of dysfunctional family systems. Healing is never meant to end with us. The freedom, self-awareness, and peace we begin to receive are not gifts meant to remain private. They are meant to shape how we live and how we relate to others. Just as the disciples were formed by walking with Jesus, we too are transformed by journeying with Him and then called to share the hope we have received.

Before ascending into heaven, Jesus gives His disciples a clear mission (Matthew 28:18-20): “Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations... teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age.” Jesus gives both a commission and a promise. He sends them out, but He does not send them alone.

This mirrors a central truth in recovery. None of us healed in isolation. Someone helped us name unhealthy patterns. Someone listened without trying to fix us. Someone shared honestly about fear, people-pleasing, perfectionism, control, emotional distance, or shame, and helped us see our own experience more clearly. At some point, what was freely given to us became part of our healing. Then, often before we feel

fully ready, we begin recognizing that what we have received is meant to be shared.

This is the spirit of Step Twelve lived out in healing relationships. Carrying the message often looks like faithful presence—showing up consistently, listening deeply, sponsoring another person, sharing honestly about our healing, or becoming a more grounded and truthful presence in our relationships. Recovery teaches us that what heals us can also become part of how God works through us.

In *The Spirituality of Imperfection*, Ernest Kurtz and Katherine Ketcham write, “In relationships of mutuality we give by getting and get by giving” (p. 83). This is deeply true in recovery. We discover that healthy connection becomes part of our healing. We keep what we have by giving it away.

The first readings throughout Easter have shown us the transformation of the apostles. They were fearful, confused, and imperfect, yet became courageous witnesses through the Holy Spirit. Their transformation did not come from having it all together, but from willingness, surrender, and grace.

The same is true for us. We do not need to wait until every wound is fully healed before being useful to God and others. Our honesty becomes hope, our growing self-awareness becomes wisdom we can share, and our healing becomes part of someone else’s courage to begin.

As Easter draws near its close and Pentecost approaches, we are reminded that recovery is not only about surviving the past. It is about becoming women and men who live differently—people shaped by grace, strengthened by fellowship, and sent forth with purpose.

Christ has ascended, but He has not abandoned us. He remains with us always—in the Eucharist, in prayer, in fellowship, and through the Spirit alive within us. What we have received is meant to be shared. As we continue in recovery, we are invited not only to follow Christ, but to become a source of hope, truth, and healing for others.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- Who helped you begin recognizing unhealthy patterns or wounds that you could not fully see on your own?

- How is your healing changing the way you show up in relationships, family life, or community?

- In what ways might God be inviting you to share the hope, truth, or wisdom you have received with others on a similar journey?

MASS READINGS

FIRST READING Acts 1:12-14

RESP. PS. Psalm 27:1, 4, 7-8

SECOND READING 1 Peter 4:13-16

GOSPEL John 17:1-11a