

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 of us impacted by another person's addiction or unhealthy attachments. Healing is never meant to end with us. The peace, clarity, and freedom we begin to receive are not gifts meant to remain private. They are meant to shape how we live, love, and accompany 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 family recovery. None of us healed in isolation. Someone listened without judgment. Someone helped us understand boundaries, surrender, and trust in God. Someone shared honestly about fear, resentment, enabling, or detachment with love. and in doing so helped us see our own path 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 family recovery. Carrying the message often looks like faithful presence—welcoming a newcomer, listening to someone in pain, sharing honestly in meetings, sponsoring another person, or offering support rooted in humility rather than control. It may also mean becoming a healthier presence within our own family system—less reactive, more grounded, and more trusting in God.

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 service is not another burden to carry. It becomes a source of spiritual strength. 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. Peter, who once denied Jesus, became a courageous leader. Their usefulness did not come from perfection, but from willingness.

The same is true for us. We do not need to have every relationship figured out or every wound fully healed before God can work through us. Our struggles, honestly shared, can become a source of hope for someone else. The peace we are learning to receive can become peace we help offer.

As Easter draws near its close and Pentecost approaches, we are reminded that recovery is not only about surviving someone else's struggle. 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 signs of His hope for others.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- Who helped you begin healing in ways you could not have found on your own?

- How are you being invited to share what you have received with others in recovery?

- What does faithful presence look like for you in this season of recovery?

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