

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 seeking freedom from lust addiction and unhealthy attachments rooted in distorted desire. Healing is never meant to end with us. The integrity, honesty, and freedom we receive are not gifts meant to remain hidden. They are meant to be shared. Just as the disciples were formed by walking with Jesus, we too are transformed by journeying with Him, and then called to help others discover the same 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 from lust addiction. None of us found freedom in secrecy or isolation. Someone spoke honestly about their hidden struggle. Someone welcomed us without shame. Someone offered sponsorship, accountability, encouragement, or truth when we needed it most. 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 passed on.

This is the heart of Step Twelve. Carrying the message often looks like faithful presence—taking a call, sponsoring another person, showing up consistently, speaking honestly about struggle and healing, or helping someone step out of shame and into the light. We discover that sharing our wounds, transformed by grace, can become part of another person’s freedom.

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 keep what we have by giving it away. Service protects us from isolation and reminds us that our recovery is part of something larger than ourselves.

The first readings throughout Easter have shown us the transformation of the apostles. They were fearful, confused, and imperfect, yet became bold witnesses through the Holy Spirit. Their usefulness came not from having flawless lives, but from surrendering their lives to God.

The same is true for us. We do not need to wait until every temptation disappears or every wound is fully healed before being useful to God and others. Our honesty becomes hope, our humility becomes witness, and our story becomes part of another person’s healing.

As Easter draws near its close and Pentecost approaches, we are reminded that recovery is not only about freedom from compulsions. It is about becoming beloved children of God 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 help others discover the dignity, truth, and freedom that He offers.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- Who helped you step out of shame, secrecy, or isolation and into greater honesty and freedom?

- How are you being invited to carry a message of hope or accompaniment to others in recovery?

- What does living as a beloved child of God look like for you in this season of healing?

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