

Reflection Questions

- Looking back on where you were before you found recovery, what changes can you see in your attitude, behavior, and spiritual life?
- What lies do you tell yourself that keep you isolated from God?
- How have you experienced peace throughout your recovery journey?

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Sunday Mass Readings This Week

1st Reading: Acts 15:1-2, 22-29

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 67:2-3, 5, 6, 8

2nd Reading: Revelation 21:10-14, 22-23

Gospel: John 14:23-29

6th Sunday of Easter



The progress we make in our recovery takes many forms and happens at various rates of change. Sometimes we can recognize monumental growth taking place in our lives and in our response to events happening around us. Other times, it feels like we take three steps forward only to take two steps back. Peace and serenity can seem like a far cry from the perceived reality of our mental and emotional condition.

It is important to lean on a fellowship of believers who share similar experience in order to avoid complete discouragement. As we reflected last week, we are bound to face obstacles in our spiritual journey. It takes a lot of courage to step into the darkness of our addictions and unhealthy attachments, especially as our previous patterns were to avoid and deny the great reality deep within us.

At first, we borrow hope from our brothers and sisters next to us, knowing that they can relate to where we've been. In our active addiction and compulsive behavior, many lies were formed that need to be reshaped. The list is long and is a common thread among us, regardless of the addiction or unhealthy attachment from which we seek freedom: "I am not worthy," "I am beyond help," "I'll never change," "I can't trust others," "I can't be loved," and "I'm too unique," are just a few of the lies that become ingrained within us until we find spiritual help.

While leaning on the 12 steps and sacraments of the Church, we see God propelling us to new heights. Slowly, we become honest with ourselves and our attachment to the things we thought we absolutely needed begin to loosen. Moments of peace arise. We experience others in recovery loving us until we are capable of loving ourselves.

As we move toward Pentecost and the descent of the Holy Spirit, we hear Jesus offer a word of hope and peace. He speaks truth to the lies that enslave us and shares the power of the Holy Spirit in order to guide us to freedom. We hear Jesus proclaim in this week's Gospel Reading:

*The Advocate, the Holy Spirit,
whom the Father will send in my name,
will teach you everything
and remind you of all that I told you.
Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you.
Not as the world gives do I give it to you.
Do not let your hearts be troubled or afraid.*

The disciples received a similar message from Jesus when He returned to them after His resurrection. While showing His wounds to His afraid and isolated followers, Christ calmly greets them by saying, "Peace be with you," or "Shalom"—a Hebrew term that not only means peace but also implies wholeness, harmony, and completeness.

We have been crafted in the image and likeness of God. Our identity lies in the unmerited grace that we are His beloved sons and daughters, regardless of our attempts to cut ourselves off from the Lord. It is possible that our efforts to find comfort are rooted in a desire that only God can fill. As we recognize the limitations and consequences of directing life according to our own will, we put faith in our Lord doing for us what we cannot do for ourselves.