

## 7th Sunday of Easter/Feast of the Ascension



Jesus spent significant time journeying with his disciples before approaching his fateful death. Over the course of three years, twelve ordinary individuals were called by name and were taught by Christ, shared meals together, and witnessed our Lord offer tender healing to those who sought him. They knew him because they spent time with him, not because they were theologians or biblical scholars.

Throughout the Easter season, we journey with the apostles and first disciples, giving us an opportunity to see the Holy Spirit working through a group of men and women who have been touched by Christ. Peter, who turned his back on Jesus as He was being put to death, has a radical conversion of spirit and leads many to Christianity. We can see our own path woven through the stories of the apostles who, after having a firsthand encounter with Jesus, are filled with joy, freedom, and hope.

It is prudent that we learn from their eagerness to serve. In doing so, we make ourselves available to our brothers and sisters looking for a morsel of hope and freedom from addiction and compulsive behaviors. Spending time in scripture, we can see how the apostles' boldness brought the faith to all corners of the globe.

We celebrate the Ascension of the Lord this week, hearing Jesus tell his disciples, "All power in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations" (Matthew 28:18-19). The Gospel Reading for the Seventh Sunday of Easter, set just prior to Christ's arrest, reveals the interior life of Jesus. We reflect on uplifting themes of new life and our calling as Catholics in recovery. Listen as our Lord beautifully invokes his prayer to the Father before giving over his earthly freedom:

*Jesus raised his eyes to heaven and said,  
"Father, the hour has come.  
Give glory to your son, so that your son  
may glorify you,  
just as you gave him authority over all people,  
so that your son may give eternal life  
to all you gave him.  
Now this is eternal life,  
that they should know you, the only true God,  
and the one whom you sent, Jesus Christ.  
I glorified you on earth  
by accomplishing the work that you gave me to do.  
Now glorify me, Father, with you,  
with the glory that I had with you before the world  
began."*

Whether embarking upon our first month of recovery or counting decades, we get an opportunity to return to the truth that is God's word. In our recovery from alcoholism, drug addiction, compulsive overeating or under-eating, gambling, porn and sex addiction, codependency, emotional challenges, grief, and other unhealthy attachments, we get the unique opportunity to experience a past that keeps us moving toward a brighter future. We know the depths and darkness of what the world has to offer. We also get the chance to know the grace that our King wants to give us in abundance.

God is our answer. As faithful Catholics, we get to experience Him in the sacraments of healing and forgiveness. He surrounds us in the body of Christ that makes up our fellowship. We are in the world but not of the world, and can make a home here while remaining in God and seeking to do His will. While doing so, we hope to share in Christ's joy completely.

- How has an encounter with Christ or a recent relationship with a fellow brother/sister in recovery offered you a new perspective of hope?
  
- How do you experience joy by living a sacramental life in recovery?

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**Mass Readings for Feast of the Ascension**

**1st Reading:** 1:1-11

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

**2nd Reading:** Ephesians 1:17-23

**Gospel:** Matthew 28:16-20