

6th Sunday of Easter



The Sunday Mass Readings this week are all about love. In fact, it's a word we will hear 10 times in a short selection from the First Letter of Saint John and 9 times in this week's Gospel Reading. Love is a word and concept that tends to be distorted for many who struggle with addictions, compulsions, and unhealthy attachments. Many of us enter into recovery with a twisted idea of what love is.

Dr. Peter Kleponis, a leading Catholic clinical therapist specializing in addiction, notes five core beliefs that develop in the mind of an addict:

- I'm not loveable
- If people really knew me, they would reject me
- I can't count on anyone, including God, to meet my needs
- I need to find something that I can control that will meet my needs
- Feeding my addiction (whatever it is) is my greatest need and source of comfort

We can grow in our capacity and understanding of love by prayerfully considering the words Jesus offers during the Last Supper dialogue taken from the Gospel of John. What matters most is not how we love God and others, it is that God loves us. Our acceptance of that is an offer of love back to Him. This week we hear:

Jesus said to his disciples:

"I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and your joy might be complete.

This is my commandment:

love one another as I love you.

No one has greater love than this,

to lay down one's life for one's friends.

You are my friends if you do what I command you.

I no longer call you slaves,

because a slave does not know what his master is doing.

I have called you friends,

because I have told you everything I have heard from my Father.

It was not you who chose me, but I who chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit that will remain,

so that whatever you ask the Father in my name he may give you.

This I command you: love one another."

In a community of believers we are given hope and a place to be accepted, regardless of the path that has brought us here. Upon receiving love from others who have been in a similar position, we can begin to turn our gaze toward God and accept the love He has for us, thus re-shaping our core beliefs.

Jesus' death on a cross is the perfect expression of love. As he mentions, "No one has greater love than this." We can't expect perfect love from ourselves, but we can participate in progressive love that moves closer to accepting the love that God and others have for us, one day at a time. Our fruit blossoms as we share with others the love that we have been freely given.

Slowly, we begin to see our attitude changing as we find freedom from addictions, compulsions and unhealthy attachments. Old patterns of thinking and behaving are replaced with a new fundamental outlook centered around the core beliefs of:

- I am lovable
- If people really knew me, they could love me more
- I can count on others and God to meet my needs
- God and healthy relationships are my greatest need and source of comfort

- How have you experienced love and acceptance throughout your recovery journey?
- How do you accept the love that God freely gives you?
- Can you relate to the change of core beliefs noted by Dr. Kleponis in this week's reflection?

New Virtual CIR Meetings

We are excited to announce two new weekly virtual CIR meetings related to the family impact of addiction (visit catholicinrecovery.com for more info):

- **Adult Children of Dysfunctional Homes Meeting:** Fridays at 7p ET/4p PT (begins April 30)
- **Family of Lust Addicts Meeting:** Thursdays at 2p ET/11a PT (begins May 6)

Both meetings gather via Zoom

Sunday Mass Readings this Week

1st Reading: Acts 10:25-26, 34-35, 44-48

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 98:1, 2-3, 3-4

2nd Reading: 1 John 4:7-10

Gospel: John 15:9-17