

Seventh Sunday of Easter



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, taught by Jesus, 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 were touched by Jesus. Peter turned his back on Christ before he was crucified but had a radical conversion of spirit and went on to lead many to Christianity. We can see our own path woven through the stories of the apostles who, after having a firsthand encounter with Jesus, were filled with joy, freedom, and hope.

We can learn much from the apostles' eagerness to serve. In doing so, we make ourselves available to our brothers and sisters looking for a morsel of hope and freedom from addictions, compulsions, and unhealthy attachments. The apostles were bold and confident in their experience as they brought the faith to all corners of the globe.

This year, we celebrate the Ascension of the Lord on Thursday, May 26, hearing Jesus tell his disciples, "Go into the whole world and proclaim the gospel to every creature" (Mark 16:15). This Sunday's Gospel Reading is set just prior to Jesus' arrest and reflects on how counter-cultural a lifestyle of faith and recovery can be. Listen as our Lord beautifully invokes his prayer to the Father before giving over his earthly freedom:

*Lifting up his eyes to heaven, Jesus prayed saying:
"Now I am coming to you.
I speak this in the world
so that they may share my joy completely.
I gave them your word, and the world hated them,
because they do not belong to the world any more
than I belong to the world.
I do not ask that you take them out of the world but
that you keep them from the evil one.
They do not belong to the world
any more than I belong to the world.
Consecrate them in the truth. Your word is truth.
As you sent me into the world,
so I sent them into the world.
And I consecrate myself for them,
so that they also may be consecrated in truth."*

Reflection Questions

Whether we are embarking upon our first weeks or months of recovery or counting decades, we get an opportunity to return to the truth that is God's word. In our recovery from a host of addictions, compulsions, and 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 to know the blessings 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 we can make a home here while remaining in God and seeking to do His will. As C.S. Lewis notes, "Aim at heaven and you will get earth thrown in. Aim at earth and you get neither."

- How does a healthy remembrance of the past keep you committed to recovery and doing God's will?
- Can you relate to Peter's experience of turning your back on Jesus? Explain how you've found reconciliation around this in your recovery.
- How do you remain of service to others in recovery? What benefits do you find as a result?

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Sunday Mass Readings this Week

1st Reading: Acts 7:55-60

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 97:1-2, 6-7, 9

2nd Reading: Revelation 22:12-14, 16-17, 20

Gospel: John 17:20-26