***Sermon Prompts for Recovery Sunday***

***Third Sunday of Easter Year A***

**Liturgical Year Context—Suffering, Death and Resurrection**

**Acts 2: 14a, 36-41**

**“Repent,” “and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.”**

**“For the promise is for you, for your children, and for all who are far away, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to him.”**

AA Step 2: “We came to believe that a power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.”

Repentance means “to realize suddenly that I have defiled and lost my spiritual beauty, that I am far away from my real home, my real life, and that something precious and pure and beautiful has been hopelessly broken in the very texture of my existence.” Alexander Schmemann, *Great Lent*

“Sometimes addiction seems more like possession, a death grip from Satan that requires supernatural intervention. Absolution from end-stage chemical obsession tends to force otherwise faithless men to their knees.” David Carr *The Night of the Gun*

“With Gospel brilliance and insight, AA says that the starting point, and, in fact, the continuing point, is not any kind of worthiness but is in fact unworthiness!” Richard Rohr, *Breathing Under Water*

“. . . the momentum of attachment [of which addiction is an extreme variation] usually carries us on, with a power all its own. Often it is not until this momentum brings us to some point of existential despair, some rock bottom, some *impasse*, that we become capable of beginning to reclaim our true desire [for God].” Gerald May, *Addiction and Grace*

**Psalm 116: 1-3, 10-17**

**Verses 2-3: “The cords of death entangled me; the grip of the grave took hold of me; I came to grief and sorrow.**

**Then I called upon the Name of the Lord;**

**‘O Lord, I pray you, save my life.’”**

AA Step 1: “We admitted that we were powerless over alcohol [or other substances or behaviors]—that our lives had become unmanageable.”

“What was it that did in reality make me an opium eater? Misery, blank desolation, abiding darkness.” Thomas DeQunicey, *Confessions of an English Opium Eater*

“. . . the reason I do drugs is so I don’t feel the feelings I feel when I don’t do drugs. When I don’t feel the drugs in me, I get depressed.” Nick, heroin and crystal meth addict

“We would rather be ruined than changed. We would rather die in our dread than climb the cross of the present and let our illusions die.” W. H Auden, qu.in Richard Rohr, *Breathing*

“Addiction is a spiritual disease, a disease of the soul, an illness resulting from longing, frustrated desire, and deep dissatisfaction—which is ironically the beginning of any spiritual path.” Richard Rohr, *Breathing*

“While the street addict has become completely consumed by the compulsivity of the addictive process and therefore lost the ability to hide his or her addiction, many of us live with *ambient* addictions to alcohol, caffeine, nicotine, prescription drugs, gambling, serial sex, Internet porn or gaming, excessive exercise, shopping, cleanliness, rage, anger or obsessive thinking. . . . Once we lift the blinders of denial, most honest souls will admit that their constant compulsivity is a form of self-betrayal and that at the core of their being there is an untouchable yet palpable pit of anxiety impervious to self-analysis.” “The Addicted Pilgrim,” in *Presence*, Vol. 20, No.2 June 2014

**First Peter 1: 17-23**

**“Through him you have come to trust in God, who raised him from the dead and gave him glory, so that your faith and hope are set on God.”**

AA Step 3: We made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of *God as we understood God*.

Making this decision is “like a freefall into God.” *Recovery*, Rumi Shapiro

“Freedom . . . is a question of aligning one’s intention with the God within and with us, through love and in grace.” Gerald May, *Addiction and Grace*

“To finally surrender ourselves to healing we have to have three spaces opened up within us—and all at the same time: our opinionated head, our closed down heart, and our defensive and defended body.” Rohr, *Breathing*

“The excruciating reality is that truly free, loving choices cannot be easy. In fact, one might timorously propose that the most free and loving choices are those that call forth the relinquishing of what one holds most dear.” May, *Addiction*

**Luke 24:13-35**

**Journey to Emmaus**

AA Step 12: Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to all alcoholics [and addicts], and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

“I soon discovered that, in fact, I had very little to give—I could not rescue people from their pain and sadness. All I could offer was to walk beside them as a fellow human being, a kindred spirit.” Liz, a nurse working with addicted persons, quoted in Gabriel Mate, *In the Realm of the Hungry Ghosts*

“Chronically unable to offer . . . caring to themselves, [addicted persons] are all the more sensitive to its presence or absence in those charged with caring for them . . . . The fear, pain, and longing we see are our own fear, pain, and longing. Ours, too, are the beauty and compassion we witness here [working with addicts on the street], the courage and the sheer determination to surmount suffering.” Mate, *In the Realm of the Hungry Ghosts*

“The events of Jesus’ life, leading to his crucifixion, demonstrated the threat he posed to people’s addictions and the lengths to which they would go to protect their attachments. In turn, the crucifixion itself demonstrated the extent to which God would go to liberate people from their attachments.” Gerald May, *Addiction*

“. . . Christ’s resurrection proclaimed absolute and unquestioned victory over attachment itself, over its consequences, and over its causes.” May, *Addiction*