

Questions or for further information

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Substance Addiction Ministry

*Educational and support resources for use in parishes and ministries*

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Substance Addiction Ministry

Bulletin Inserts Ideas

1. For those whose lives have been impacted by alcoholism & addiction, the challenge before us is **“...accepting people just as they are, with all their limits and inner pain, but also with their gifts and their beauty and their capacity to grow: to see the beauty inside the pain.” (Fr. Jean Vanier in From Brokenness to Community)**
2. “When another person makes you suffer, it is because he suffers deeply within himself, and his suffering is spilling over. He does not need punishment; he needs help. That's the message he is sending.”

― Thích Nhất Hạnh

1. Alcoholism does not discriminate . . . it has no regard to one’s career, vocation, ethnicity, financial status, gender, sexual orientation, etc.
2. Check out the link below -- Archbishop Joseph W. Tobin, as keynote plenary presenter at the Guest House Leadership Conference (2013), reflects on how alcoholism affects priestly life, ministry and the efficacy of pastoral care. He beautifully describes how the 12 Step program of AA supports recovery through sobriety. **https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1vvsfS-Rh-0**
3. There is much wisdom in the AA Steps, which were drawn from the bible. The 12 Steps are a way of living . . . for all of us, whether struggling with addiction or not.
4. **Step One: We admitted we were powerless over alcohol-that our lives had become unmanageable.**

Heavenly Father, I admit that I am powerless over my addiction/my loved one -- my life has become unmanageable. Please help me draw on Your strength and turn away from my inclination to keep trying to beat it. I'm powerless. Help me admit defeat here, without feeling like a defeated person. I can't control my addiction/my loved one -- it controls me. I pray for the clarity of mind to stop feeling sorry for myself because I can no longer have my crutch, and, with You as my guide, focus on the serenity of realizing I don't need it anymore. I throw in the towel. I quit. Please help me stop fighting and start healing. Amen.

1. **AA Step Two: We came to believe that a power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.**

Lord God, I believe Your power is infinitely greater than mine. I can't handle my addiction, or control my loved one. You can. I'm not always sure who or what You are, but I want to develop a relationship and stop justifying my insane and controlling behavior. I want to know You. I believe You can help me, but I'm intimidated. I'm afraid. I don't know how to cope with life. I need Your strength.

1. **AA Step Three: We made a decision to turn our will and our life over to the care of God as we understood Him.**

God, I offer myself to Thee - to build with me and do with me as Thou wilt. Relieve me of the bondage of self, that I may better do Thy will. Take away my difficulties, that victory over them may bear witness to those I would help of Thy Power, Thy Love and Thy Way of life. May I do Thy will always! (Third Step prayer reprinted from page 63 of the AA Big Book)

1. **AA Step Four: Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.**

Dear God, I'm afraid to look at myself honestly. I want to talk about my strengths, not my restraints. Today, right now, please open my mind so I can see myself as You see me, in all the shades of both good and bad. Please help me search deeply enough to reflect on the character traits You've given me and acknowledge when I use them as You would have me, and when I don't. Please help me get it all on paper, fearlessly. Amen.

1. **AA Step Five: Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.**

Heavenly Father, thank You for getting me this far, for helping me admit defeat to my addiction, showing me that a power greater than myself could restore my sanity and for opening my eyes to You, as that power in my life. Thank you for guiding me in assessing myself morally. Now I need to share that assessment with You, myself and someone else. I'm afraid. I need Your strength. Please let me lean on You again. I know You won't judge me as hard as I judge myself, but I need constant reminding. I know I can't out-sin Your grace, but sometimes it seemed like I tried anyway. Please help me clean that slate. Help me forgive myself and leave as much of this behind as I can. Help me draw on another person for guidance, and allow him or her restore me. Amen.

1. **AA Step 6: Were entirely ready to have God remove our defects of character.**

God, I've held onto my character defects for way too long; my anger, my judgment, and my finger-pointing. They are never assets. They always hurt me and others and You. So do my embellishments, my half-truths and my lies, So do my resentments and my eagerness to find fault in others and inability to admit my own. I want to stop justifying who deserves my worst and bragging about how I give it to them. I want to follow Your example. I need Your strength. Amen.

1. **AA Step 7: Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings**.

The Step 7 prayer (from the AA Big Book) My Creator, I am now willing that You should have all of me, good and bad. I pray that you remove from me every single defect of character which stands in the way of my usefulness to you and my fellows. Grant me strength, as I go out from here, to do Your bidding. Amen.

1. **AA Step 8: Made a list of all persons we had harmed and became willing to make amends to them all.**

Heavenly Father, please help me see the harms my character defects have caused myself and others. I'll write down the harms which were completely my fault, the harms I caused when responding to others' harms to me, and harms that were barley mine. Please help me accept that their slates with me are clean. They owe me nothing. I pray that You help me be willing to clean my slate with each of them. Amen.

1. **AA Step 9: Made amends to such people except when to do so would injure them or others.**

Lord, please be in my mind, on my lips, and in my heart as I try to make my amends. Please help me focus on what's right and not who's right. Help me discuss my part in things, and that's all. Help me find humility, candor and sometimes humor. Help me make things right when I can. In cases where the harm I've done is irreparable, give me Your strength to ask for forgiveness. Help me forgive, even when I'm not forgiven. Amen.

1. **AA Step 10: Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong, promptly admitted it.**

Dear Lord, I don't want the public version of myself to be different from the private anymore. Help me think of You often, but not loathe myself as I did when my addiction was active. When You come to mind too late, help me rectify those situations at once and minimize resentments for everyone. Help me not be too tough on myself. Help me laugh. Help me like me again and help me be the person others like. Amen.

1. **AA Step 11: Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God, as we understood him, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.**

Father God, You don't need my help, I need Yours. You don't need my “to do” list every time I pray, I need Yours. Help me improve at being Your vessel. Help me listen for You in every conversation every day, and help me find the strength of character to do Your will, not mine. Amen.

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

Almighty Father in Heaven, I'm grateful to get to know You better. Help me help others. Help me not be intimidated. Help me see Your miracles but not expect them. Help me accept that some aren't yet ready for my help. Help me be a better version of me to other addicts and alcoholics, and give the best version of me to those who love me most. They've earned it. Amen.

1. “To all of you who struggle against drug addiction, and to those family members who share in your difficulties: the Church is not distant from your troubles, but accompanies you with affection. The Lord is near you and he takes you by the hand. Look to him in your most difficult moments and he will give you consolation and hope.” Pope Francis, July 2013
2. Richard Rohr, Franciscan. teacher and author of Breathing Under Water, writes poignantly about spirituality and the 12 Steps of recovery. For those battling any type of addiction, he reminds us that:

We suffer to get well.

We surrender to win.

We die to live.

We give it away to keep it.

1. **For those who choose recovery, AA offers The Promises . . .**

If we are painstaking about this phase of our development, we will be amazed before we are half way through. We are going to know a new freedom and a new happiness. We will not regret the past nor wish to shut the door on it. We will comprehend the word serenity and we will know peace. No matter how far down the scale we have gone, we will see how our experience can benefit others. That feeling of uselessness and self-pity will disappear. We will lose interest in selfish things and gain interest in our fellows. Self-seeking will slip away. Our whole attitude and outlook on life will change. Fear of people and of economic insecurity will leave us. We will intuitively know how to handle situations which used to baffle us. We will suddenly realize that God is doing for us what we could not do for ourselves. Are these extravagant promises? We think not. They are being fulfilled among us – sometimes quickly, sometimes slowly. They will always materialize if we work for them. The AA Big Book, pp 83 – 84

1. Acceptance is the answer to ALL of my problems today. When I am disturbed, it is because I find some person, place, thing or situation -- some fact of my life -- unacceptable to me, and I can find no serenity until I accept that person, place, thing, or situation as being exactly the way it is supposed to be at this moment. Nothing, absolutely nothing, happens in God's world by mistake. Until I could accept my alcoholism, I could not stay sober; unless I accept my life completely on life's terms, I cannot be happy. I need to concentrate not so much on what needs to be changed in the world as on what needs to be changed in me and in my attitudes. AA Big Book, page 417
2. Pope Francis has a very deep and abiding love for those struggling with alcohol and drug addiction. He challenges those struggling as well as friends and family members . . . "To embrace someone is not enough," We must hold the hand of the one in need, of the one who has fallen into the darkness of dependency perhaps without even knowing how, and we must say to him or her: 'You can get up, you can stand up. It is difficult, but it is possible if you want to.' ” ~ Visit to St. Francis of Assisi of the Providence of God Hospital, Rio de Janeiro on July 24, 2013
3. At his visit to St. Francis of Assisi of the Providence of God Hospital, Rio de Janeiro on July 24, 2013, Pope Francis stated that those struggling with drug dependency deserve the "closeness, affection and love" of all society. “We all need to look upon one another with the loving eyes of Christ, and to learn to embrace those in need, in order to show our closeness, affection and love.”
4. **Support & Resources**
* Check out all the informational & educational videos, books and publications to help drug prevention on website: www.drugabuse.gov
* Alcoholism, addiction & mental health issues touch so many of our lives. The good news is that help is available for anyone whose life has been afflicted by the illness, or affected by a loved one’s illness.
* Support groups for those afflicted include various 12 Step programs
* (i.e. AA/NA/GA/OA, etc) as well as Celebrate Recovery & SMART Recovery programs.
* For parents/family/loved ones, hope can be found through various 12 Step programs (i.e. Alanon/Naraon/CODA/ACOA, etc) as well as Parents of Addicted Loved-ones (PAL) & South Indy Family Support Over Heroin/Opiates (Christian-based support group held at St. Roch).