

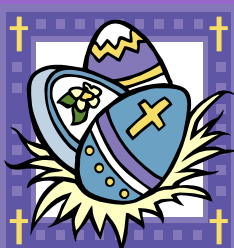


Catholic Diocese of Cleveland
Catholic Charities Parish & Community Ministries
Department for Marriage & Family Ministry



IN THIS ISSUE:

- Quick Start Program** 1, 6
- Spiritual Makeover** 2
- Annulment Process: Alcohol / Drug Dependency** 3
- Addiction Issues in Relationships** 4-5
- Programs and Resources** 6



Newsletter for the Divorced--Ministry of Compassion

But we hold this treasure in earthen vessels, that the surpassing power may be of God and not from us.
2 Cor. 4:7

VOLUME 3 ISSUE 1

SPRING 2009

Addictions Destroy Relationships

By William H. Boomer, M.A., Director, Department for Marriage & Family Ministry

Often, when someone calls us for marriage counseling, what they really need is help with addiction.

Addictions destroy relationships. In this issue we take a closer look at alcohol addiction. It is the most common form of addiction and our Tribunal has found over half of annulment cases involve alcoholism.

Spiritually, addiction is a form of idolatry. It enslaves the user and brings them to destruction.

In marriage, alcoholism (or any addiction) is a form of infidelity

since it becomes the primary relationship for the user. From it comes lying, mistrust, anger, resentment, hurt and craziness.

In marriage preparation, we now ask each partner questions about alcohol abuse in themselves, their partner and their family of origin. Alcoholism is a family disease that harms each family member. It can seriously limit a person's ability for trust, intimacy, communication and commitment. Wise couples address these issues before marrying.

We advise married couples to

seek professional help for any alcohol issues. This can save your marriage. Denial or avoidance is the road to ruin. Many couples are now in recovery and again happy.

Sometime separation or divorce (or threatening it) is the tough love needed to stop the downward addiction spiral. It can save lives and some marriages.

Divorce recovery includes alcohol recovery for many. *Have hope! Seek help! You can recover from this disease.*

Tribunal Quick Start Program

by Lynette Tait, J.C.L., Judge at the Tribunal

The Tribunal will be testing a new method for presenting formal cases – the *Quick Start Program*. Since many find it difficult to complete the standard questionnaire due to its length, a shorter initial questionnaire was developed which can be completed after attending an orientation meeting and presenting it, along with the petition form and documents, at an individual meeting.

The first meeting will be an orientation to the Tribunal procedures and an explanation

of the Quick Start Program. Each individual who is interested in the program will be given the necessary materials and will have two weeks to answer the questions and gather the necessary documents.

The second meeting is an individual appointment with Tribunal personnel to review the material. Individuals will be given information concerning procurators and asked to consult with one prior to the presentation of their materials. Participants

must understand that additional questions will follow during the processing of the case and must be prepared to cooperate fully by submitting written answers or presenting themselves for an interview.

Three parishes have agreed to host the two meetings required for this process. Refer to the page 6 for meeting times and locations.

Questions: Lynette Tait, J.C.L., Judge at the Tribunal, 216-696-6525 or 800-869-6525, ext. 4000.

Spiritual “Make-Over” After Divorce, Part II

By Rev. Robert J. Sanson, J.C.D., M.Th.

I have been a Pastor for 17 years, and worked in the Diocesan Tribunal for 13 years, so I have ministered to many divorced persons who needed to be assured that God loves them still and that they can have a new relationship with a loving God that is even better after they are divorced. How could I summarize the spiritual direction I give to the divorced?

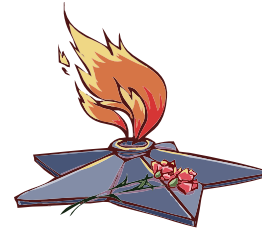
Part II. Healing will happen—after you “clean the wound”

When I was a judge in the Tribunal, those writing their story for the annulment process sometimes told me, “This process is too painful. I do not want to open old wounds.” I truly believe that the process can be therapeutic and healing, if you are ready to face the truth of what happened, be grateful for the insights, be ready for forgiveness and growth, and also willing to “clean out the wound.” When a wound is still festering with an infection, it must be opened, medicine applied, and then it can heal properly. To use another analogy, one of my heroes is Dr. Dick Fratianne, who was head and “spiritual director” of the Burn Unit at Metro Hospital for many years. He had to supervise and “console” the nurses, whose duty it was to daily rip off the old bandages, causing much pain, so they could clean the burns, apply new antiseptic, and again bind up the wounds.

Jesus’ cross is very similar. St. Paul would speak of the tremendous love of Christ—and the way of suffering in following Jesus. We make up in our own flesh what is “lacking” in the sufferings of Christ. Divorce can be a real participation in the wounds of Christ and his compassionate companionship. The better word for Jesus may be “empathic,” since He has “been there” in betrayal and broken relationships.

Another powerful image was recently given in a homily by Fr. Dan Schlegel, a Pastor in Chagrin Falls. Fr. Dan is also active in the “Retrouvaille” movement, where those who are separated and divorced stand before God to make a last attempt to save their marriage—or to know they have done everything, before

God, and need to accept divorce. Fr. Dan told us a parable of Yellowstone National Park, which had a devastating forest fire, where a huge percentage of the park went up in flames and burned to the ground. But then, just a few hundreds of new trees be-up unexpected-discovered that shed by the old the ground, but high tempera-them, and open ing new life. The fire was “meant for burning,” but also to produce new and fresh growth. Could your divorce be like God’s fire in your life?



The process can be therapeutic and healing, if you are ready to face the truth of what happened, be grateful for the insights, be ready for forgiveness and growth, and also willing to “clean out the wound.”

Rev. Robert J. Sanson is Pastor of St. Joseph Church in Strongsville, Ohio. Part I of this article was printed in the Fall 2008 issue of Earthen Vessels. Part III will be included in the next issue

The Annulment Process: Alcohol / Drug Dependency and Marriage Invalidiation

By Sr. Christine Rody, SC, J.C.L., Defender of the Bond, Marriage Tribunal

What is a marriage in the Church? As was explained in the first *Earthen Vessels*, (Vol. I, Issue 1, Winter 2007), the Church views marriage as a lifelong commitment of husband and wife to each other for the good of the other and with an openness to children. It is not only a private matter but an action with consequences for both the Church and society.

Who can marry? Simply answered, adult men and women who are free and capable can marry. **What does free mean?** It means the person has no impediment, like an existing marriage, or is not being forced into the marriage.

What does capable mean? This answer is a little more involved. It means having a healthy sense of personal worth, having developed a maturity and willingness to give oneself in close personal relations, being able to maintain responsibility for the well-being of others, and having a desire to give the rest of one's life in fidelity and exclusivity to the other party.

What do freedom and capability have to do with alcohol and other drug dependencies or addictions? Straightforwardly, a great deal. How free or capable would a drug addicted or alcohol dependent person be to commit his/her life to another? This is the basic question asked by Tribunal personnel as they look at Catholics who have divorced. If it can be proved by testimony that if one of the persons was not either free or capable to decide to marry, then in the eyes of the Church, there was no marriage.

What kind of testimony shows either the lack of freedom or the incapacity of the person? When people reply to the questions asked by the Tribunal, they give examples of behaviors that demonstrate what it is they are saying. For example, a witness may comment on how difficult it was for a partner to care for the children alone, because the other partner was too inebriated much of the time to be trusted. Or another might say, the party was so into drugs (alcohol or others) that procurement of the drug was that person's first and/or only concern. Or one of the partner's parent or sibling may offer that everyone, outside the two parties marrying, noted that the other partner seemed to drink too much whenever the family gathered for celebrations. The truth as observed by others outside the marriage is the testimony for which the court is looking.

Who makes the decision about whether the dependency or addiction interfered with the marriage having taken place? The judge(s) who have been assigned to the case consider the evidence and decide if it is sufficient to show that under canon law a marriage as understood by the Church did not take place.

These few questions and answers have tried to relate the topic explored

elsewhere in this newsletter (Maureen Dee's article) to marriages the Tribunal examines. The Tribunal uses the Church's understanding of marriage as a lifelong sacred bond between two persons. This bond has to be based on the freedom and capacity of both parties. If either of those two elements is hindered by dependency or addiction in one of the parties, then it is impossible for a marriage as the Church understands it to take place.

Sr. Christine Rody holds a degree in canon law from Catholic University, Washington, DC. She can be reached at the Tribunal of the Diocese of Cleveland at 216-696-6525, or www.dioceseofcleveland.org/tribunal/



Serenity Prayer

God grant me the serenity
 To accept the things I cannot change
 The courage to change the things I can
 And the wisdom to know the difference.
 Living one day at a time,
 Accepting hardship as a pathway to peace,
 Taking, as Jesus did,
 This sinful world as it is, not as I would have it.
 Trusting that you will make all things right if I surrender to your will,
 So that I may be reasonably happy in this life and
 Supremely happy with you forever in the next. Amen.

Rienhold Niebuhr

Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse and Addiction Issues in Relationships

By Maureen Dee, LISW-S, Catholic Charities

About one out of every five families co-exist with a family member who has problematic use of alcohol and/or other drugs. Most of us do not have to reach too far back in our family histories to identify one or more family members with this problem. Sometimes we might have our suspicions, but not be sure if a partner, child, spouse or other relative is having a problem directly related to their misuse of alcohol or other drugs. Other times it is crystal clear. Either way, family relationships are acutely affected.

Living with someone who is afflicted with the disease of chemical dependency is painful, overwhelming and often contributes to other problems for each person living in the home. Often it contributes to separation, divorce and deep emotional sorrow for all those involved. In fact, alcoholism and/or other drug abuse or addiction and its effects are leading contributors to separation and divorce.

The purpose of this article and others which may appear in future editions of "Earthen Vessels" is to provide a helpful perspective to those in the throes of the disease. This article provides an introduction. Specific questions you may like answered can be directed to: ---- and in future editions one question will be selected each time for a response.

Here are some important points to remember about this problem.

1. Once a person crosses the (very gray) line from abuse to addiction, we consider that they have a disease or illness with its own specific signs and symptoms which make it recognizable. The disease is considered "progressive", meaning that once dependent or addicted, the person using substances will get worse as long as they keep using. If the problem is not clear at first, it will only become clearer over time if in fact they have the disease of addiction. It is also considered "chronic",

meaning that it continues or reappears as long as the person is using or goes back to using substances. This explains the phenomenon of "relapse." It is also fatal. An addicted person will die from their addiction and/or related complications if they continue to use substances (for example, physical deterioration, accidents, injuries, overdose or suicide). Learn everything you can about abuse and addiction. There is a ton of information on the internet. Try the National Clearinghouse of Alcohol and Drug Information at ncadi.samhsa.gov and pick a topic under "Quick Facts" or go to www.google.com and type in a subject of interest.

2. Alcohol is our country's number one drug. For this reason, we often refer to "alcohol and/or other drugs" to help remind others that alcohol is as significant as other drugs when considering problem use and addiction. If addicted to one type of substance, substituting for another only transfers the problem.

3. Drugs of abuse or addiction cover a wide spectrum. The use of a substance for non medical reasons, whereby euphoria or pleasant feelings are sought, is the typical path to drug abuse. Once a person resorts to using substances to manage feelings, such as drinking when "stressed" or getting high when angry or sad, the drug use is now substituting for healthy problem solving skills. When the use of substances causes other problems, such as hangovers, fights, accidents, legal charges, etc., the use has become problematic. Repeated negative consequences are a sign of substance abuse.

4. It is not the drug of choice which defines an abuse or addiction problem, but the relationship the user has with that drug. A dependent

relationship with the drug or that desire to get "high" is one in which the user becomes preoccupied with accessing or using the substance. Preoccupation is the key dynamic of most addictions. It means that the user prioritizes using, getting high, or engaging in activities to secure the substances in order to get high, over other responsibilities. These using activities become more important to the user than anything else: family relationships or home obligations; work or school; health; legal responsibilities; values and self concept. Are you now getting the picture as to why it is so hard to sustain a rational relationship with a person dependent on alcohol and/or other drugs? It is not because the family member is undesirable or unworthy of their affection, it is because the bond with using is way more important, and will remain so as long as the alcoholic or addict keeps using.

5. The bond with using is so strong that the addicted person will defend it to the hilt. Often an alcoholic or addict will seem irrational and selfish. Typical defense mechanisms are denial (lying, misrepresenting or avoiding the truth); minimizing (down playing the truth); rationalizing (making multiple and routine excuses); blaming (always pointing the finger elsewhere and not taking ownership for ones problems); and delusions (actually believing the falsehoods or fabrications one tells – either because they don't remember due to blacking out or because their denial and rationalization is so strong). Arguing with a chemically dependent person can be crazy-making. Using reason will always result in the realization that it does not make sense.

6. The good news is that the disease of addiction is treatable and treatment really does work. The bad

(Continued on page 5)

(Continued from page 4)

news is that only the alcoholic or addict can make the decision to embrace treatment – and usually will only do so when they don't feel as though they have a choice ("I was sick and tired of being sick and tired"). Family members may put a lot of effort in trying to get the user to "see the light" and to stop using. But family members are just as powerless over that as the dependent person is over their addiction. We say that just as the substance dependent person is preoccupied with using, so do family members become preoccupied with the user. "Where is s/he?" "What is s/he up to?" "What mood will s/he be in when s/he returns?" Actions such as pouring out alcohol or flushing drugs, going through their belongings, listening in on conversations, etc. are all examples of preoccupation.

7. Sometimes doing caring things can be contributing to the problem, rather than the solution. Because family members are preoccupied with the user, they are also preoccupied with their image and with "fixing" the problem. Covering for the alcoholic or addict's lack of responsibilities such as lying for them, bailing them out, picking up after them, absolving them of their duties, etc. are called "enabling" behaviors because they contribute to the addict's belief that the problem is not that bad. This is why family members can become "co-dependent." Family members may think that their behavior is causing the problem and feel guilty. Addicted persons are very good at imparting guilt. Family members can lose perspective of what is normal and healthy, and start to make compromises themselves. Family members feel sad, anxious, fed up, ineffective or deeply pained. They always feel stressed.

8. Because of the disease quality of chemical dependency, and the very strong bond the user has with using, they often do not seek help voluntarily. The idea of giving up their "best friend" or of not using at all is unimaginable to them. Rather than compete with this, family mem-

bers really need to seek their own support. Sometimes the using family member will be threatened by this and make it difficult. However, the insanity of addiction will continue unless someone in the family starts to change.

9. More good news: Northeast Ohio has a wealth of free support groups for recovery. Support is there for the asking. Our region is full of people of all walks of life who are, often anonymously, actively working recovery programs. Recovery changes lives and relationships. There is absolutely no reason to feel that you have to do it alone. It is within the circles of recovery that persons can begin to feel free of the stigma. Thanks to Dr. Bob and Bill W., the 12 step recovery groups for addicted individuals (AA, NA, CA, etc.) and family members (Alanon, Families Anonymous, Alateen) are the strongest and most successful means to daily recovery health. You can get a comprehensive list of all the groups in town by area by calling your Alcoholics Anonymous or Al-Anon number in the phone book or by picking up a meeting booklet at a neighborhood meeting. In Cleveland, Alcoholics Anonymous is at 216 241 7387 www.aacleveland.com and Al-Anon is 216-621-1381 www.afgcleveland.org "Shop around" and find a group you are comfortable with. Start to read the literature, such as the Big Book.

What is the first step to treatment? Get an assessment. A chemical dependency assessment is a chance to talk to a licensed and experienced chemical dependency counselor who will interview you to find out how your use of alcohol and/or other drugs is affecting major life areas. The assessment inquires about your relationship with alcohol and/or other drugs, your history of using and its effects, and comes up with a diagnosis which could be either substance abuse or substance dependence. The type of diagnosis and the severity of a person's symptoms in a variety of areas leads to recommendations for the most appropriate intensity of treatment. The treatment levels of care will range from least restrictive

(abuse diagnoses) to more restrictive (dependence diagnoses). There are three main levels of care: non intensive outpatient (group or individual counseling once or twice per week); intensive outpatient (group counseling 3 times per week for at least 3 hours each and some individual counseling); residential treatment (24 hours in a residential setting for varying lengths of stay). It will be important for the treatment program to monitor your ability to remain alcohol and other drug free and should ideally involve family members in a family program. If you are not able to remain drug free in a particular level of care, you may actually need a more intense level of care.

Assessments are offered by a variety of programs, agencies and hospitals in your area. You can contact your local Alcohol and Drug Addiction Board for a directory, or call us at Catholic Charities Services. There are many public or private practice assessment providers and you will ideally want to meet with one who is licensed in chemical dependency counseling.

Maureen Dees is a Master's level Licensed Independent Chemical Dependency Counselor (LICDC) and Licensed Independent Social Work Supervisor (LISW-S) who has been involved in the provision of alcohol and other drug abuse and addiction treatment services at Catholic Charities for over 30 years. She currently administers Catholic Charities Services' Chemical Dependency Services which consist of assessment, group, individual counseling and case management services at 5 locations in Cuyahoga County and offices in Geauga and Lorain counties as well. Specific sites include adult residential (Matt Talbot Inn; Matt Talbot for Women); adult intensive outpatient and non intensive at Cleveland Midtown offices and in Geauga; youth intensive outpatient on Cleveland Near West Side and non intensive outpatient assessment and case management services elsewhere; Hispanic Services on Cleveland's Near West Side and services for youth at Parmadale. To reach the Catholic Charities Services Chemical Dependency Office call 216 391 2030 and ask for the Intake Coordinator.

Catholic Diocese of Cleveland
Catholic Charities Parish &
Community Ministries
Department for Marriage &
Family Ministry



William H. Boomer, Director
7911 Detroit Avenue
Cleveland, Ohio 44102
Phone 216-334-2978



The Department for Marriage and Family Ministry's mission is to respond to the needs of families through development of pastoral programs that are administered through parishes and community leaders that focus on the teachings of the Catholic Church on marriage and family issues. In regards to the Separated and Divorced Ministry, the office has developed a collaborative ministry throughout the Diocese of Cleveland for parish districts to share resources and outreach to divorced Catholics. This would include educational programs, retreats, support groups, single parenting groups as well as provide referrals to counselors and other community resources. There are also brochures and materials published by the office to help families. For additional information, please contact Carol Petro, LSW, Marriage and Family Specialist for the Separated, Divorced and Remarriage Ministry at 216-334-2975 or e-mail at clpetro@clevelandcatholiccharities.org.

Programs and Resources

Alcohol Treatment Resources

Alcoholics Anonymous - www.aacleveland.com

Al-Anon www.afgcleveland.org

Alcohol & Drugs Info - ncadi.samhsa.gov

Special Event: "From Binge to Blackout"

Addressing teen drinking Mar 31-Apr 2, 2009

www.parent2parentnetwork.org

Book: Codependent No More by Melody Beattie

Lorain County Area Hope Workshop

for Separated/Divorced
Call for Current Programs

St. Joseph School Library

200 St. Joseph Drive

Amherst, OH 44011

Contact Maria Maldonado

440-988-2848 ext. 205

Tribunal Quick Start Locations

See Article on page 1. Registration is not necessary for the first meeting at each parish.

St. Raphael Church, Bay Village School Lunchroom

I. Tuesday, April 14, 2009, 7 p.m.

II. Tuesday, April 28, 2009, **by appointment only**

Immaculate Conception Church Willoughby / Gym

I. Thursday, April 16, 2009, 7:30 p.m.

II. Thursday, April 30, 2009, **by appointment only**

Holy Martyrs Church, Medina Pfeiffer Room

I. Thursday, April 23, 2009, 7:30 p.m.

II. Thursday, May 7, 2009, **by appointment only**

Lake/Geauga County

www.divorced-separated.net

St. Noel, Willoughby

Call 440-352-8282

Lenten Retreat

"Who You Were, Then and Now"

Saturday, March 21, 2009, 1—4 p.m., \$20

St. Hilary, 2750 West Market St.

Fairlawn, OH 44333

Registration: Carolyn Humston 330-653-8181

For more workshops and divorce recovery support groups and programs, please visit

www.clevelandcatholiccharities.org/mfm

Click on **Divorce Ministry**

For **referrals to counselors** in your area, please contact the Department for Marriage and Family Ministry at 216-334-2975 or clpetro@clevelandcatholiccharities.org

Catholic Divorce Ministry—www.nasdc.org

