



Providing The Way



A business trip to Guest House; her recovery journey begins!

by Sr. Patricia Proctor

As I write this it has been less than a year since I left treatment at Guest House. I was there for eight months. My life was changed 360 degrees during that time. I am a writer so I would prefer to have 25,000 words to tell you the difference Guest House made for me – but they want me to limit myself so I will do my best.

My first experience of Guest House was a “Walking with the Wounded” workshop. This is a weeklong event that helps religious leadership to identify addictive behavior among their members and how to support their recovery. It is an intense week in which the participants get an in-depth look at what addiction is and how it affects the addict and the religious community as it progresses.

I did not come with the thought that I was in need of treatment myself. A sister in our community had previously gone through treatment and she came back a totally new person. The program had done more for her than we could possibly have hoped for. She was not totally “healed” (with addiction that is a life-long process) but the difference was like night and day. As a community we wanted to do as much as we could to keep her

on the recovery path as well as understand our own role in her recovery.

The decision for me to go was a last minute one. Normally it is for those who are in leadership and I was not but the Vicarress said she felt strongly that I was supposed to go. I went and talked to the Abbess about it and she said that she was entirely supportive of my going. So I went.

I thought it was going to be a fun week. I thought I would attend a few sessions on addiction but mostly just have a nice week’s vacation. We don’t take vacations in our monastery and this sounded like the closest thing to getting one I was going to get. It turned out not to be a vacation.

The team that leads the workshop has been doing it for many years. They have it down to a science. Every hour was power packed and mind boggling. Before I went on the workshop I figured I was the last sister who needed to go as I had more experience with addiction than anyone else in the community. Before entering the monastery I had been in the Navy.

During the fourth year of my



Sister Patricia Proctor

enlistment the commanding officer decided I needed a change of duty and sent me to a drug treatment center. It made more sense to me to send someone who didn’t have a clue about addiction than someone who had already been there and done that.

I arrived for the ‘Walking with the Wounded’ week with the preconceived notion that I already knew as much as I needed to know. Two days into the week I had absorbed so much new information my head was swimming. On the third day the information became more than just facts and figures and nice stuff that was good to know.

It started becoming as they say, “up-front and personal.” Dr. Doug gave a morning talk on how addiction works on the brain. He showed slides. He outlined the step-by-step progression of addiction. It doesn’t

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go away. It doesn't get cured. It was, I was, Oh my God – I could still be addicted!

Then the two sisters leading the workshop, Sister Lee Ann and Sister Mary Gene Kinney shared their personal stories of addiction and their treatment journey. The more they talked the sicker I got. My head started pounding. I was having trouble concentrating and my heart was beating so fast I thought I might explode. I had to get out of there. The only thing that kept going through my mind over and over was, "My treatment was not like that." "My treatment was not like that."

When it came time for lunch I could not eat. I asked if I could be excused to go lie down for a bit. Sister Mary Gene drove me back to the mansion where my room was. I assured her I would be ready to come back for the rest of the session in an hour. I just needed to lie down.

Alone in my room, it got worse, my head pounded, my stomach hurt, I threw up. I crawled back to bed and called on the phone that I wasn't going to be able to come back that afternoon. I was the sickest I had ever been in my life. I wanted to remove my head and just die.

Surprisingly the next day I was much better. The sister I had come with had arranged for the two of us to have personal time with Sister Mary Gene. We met during the lunch break. At one

point during the conversation, I'm not sure how it came about; Sister Colleen told Sister Mary Gene that I had an anger problem. I was shocked. I had an anger problem? That totally blew me out of the water. Where did that come from? We hadn't even been talking about me!

What came next was even more surprising. Sister Mary Gene looked quietly at me and said, "You know, Patricia, you could take the program if you wanted to." Whoa! Now, where did that come from? Was this a setup?

I stared at her for a moment in shock. A million thoughts went through my head. Did I really need treatment? Was I really so bad that I needed treatment? I hadn't taken drugs and alcohol for 28 years; how could I be an addict? A picture flashed through my head of my arrival at the Naval treatment center almost 32 years before. I had arrived at midnight with three other sailors, all men.

The counselor spoke to them and they went off in one direction. Then he took me to an empty classroom and invited me to have sex with him. I closed my eyes to block out that memory.

All I could think of in reply to Sister Mary Gene was, "Well, this is not like the treatment program I went through before. I will think about it."

I finished the remaining day and a half of the 'Walking with the Wounded' program and then

flew back to my monastery in Spokane, Washington. Sister Colleen said she had not expected Mary Gene to say that. I believed her but I didn't know what to make of the whole situation. I was thinking, thinking, thinking.

Once back in the monastery it took me two days to come to a decision. I wanted to go for treatment. I didn't think I had an addiction problem but I wasn't sure. Sister Colleen's statement that I had an anger problem floored me. I had not thought of myself as being angry before. Frustrated, annoyed, impatient, I could see bits and pieces of that for sure. But anger?

Anger was something other people directed at me. I had grown up in a large family with a lot of love and support but there was also a lot of anger. Especially drunken anger in which people were hurt and windows were broken and guns were fired. It was not always the safest place.

My dad was the Catholic in the family. When he was not drinking he was the most wonderful person in the world, though often worried about how to support such a large family. There were eleven kids. I loved my mom. She was the best mom she could be though spread pretty thin among so many kids. I have wonderful memories of growing up along with the not so good ones.

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Your Will Is A Way

Often, donors will write to us with basic questions about making a will and remembering Guest House in their estate plans. Below, we've outlined the facts about the importance of making a will, and also provided details on how to do it.

Why Should You Make a Will?

A will, also called a "last will and testament," can help you to protect your family, and your property. You can also use a will to:

- Leave your property to people or organizations
- Name a personal guardian to care for your minor children
- Name a trusted person to manage property you leave to minor children, loved one's or organizations, and
- Name a personal representative, the person who makes sure that the terms of your will are carried out.

What Happens If You Die Without a Will?

In many states, if you die without a will, your property will be distributed according to state "intestacy" laws. For example, Michigan's intestacy law gives one's property to the closest relatives, beginning with the spouse and children. If the deceased has neither a spouse nor children, grandchildren or parents will get the property. This list continues with increasingly distant relatives, including siblings, grandparents, aunts and uncles, cousins, and the spouse's relatives. If the court exhausts this list and

cannot find any living heirs either by blood or marriage, the state will keep the property.



Do I Need a Lawyer to Make a Will?

Unless you know all the legal rules to make a legally binding will, or if you have a complicated bequest, you may want to consult a lawyer.

Can I provide for my family and still leave a bequest to a favorite charity?

Absolutely! In fact, we recommend that you consider family first, and then charitable organizations you wish to support beyond your lifetime. You can accomplish this by setting up your will to provide a percentage of your estate to charity, after you provide for family members.

This can also be done in other ways, including through a trust that designates income for your surviving heirs after your death, and during their lifetimes. Upon their death, the trust balance would be provided to the charity of your choice. You can fund these trusts with outright gifts of cash, stock proceeds, or even insurance policy proceeds. *In fact, if you took out a whole life insurance policy when your children were young and at home, now may be the time to consider redeeming it for charitable purposes!*

Forms of Bequest

1. General Bequest

"I give, devise and bequeath to (*name and address of charity*), the sum of \$_____ (and/or the securities or other property described herein, namely _____), for its general uses and purposes as directed by its Board."

2. Bequest – Income Only To Be Used

"I give, devise and bequeath to (*name of charity*), the principal amount of \$_____ (and/or the securities or other properties described herein, namely _____), comprising such principal amount to be invested and reinvested, and the income only therefrom is to be used as directed by its Board for its general uses and purposes."

3. Designated Bequest

"I give, devise and bequeath to (*name of charity*), the principal amount of \$_____ (and/or the securities or other properties described herein, namely _____), comprising such principal amount to be invested and reinvested, and the income only therefrom is to be used for the specific purpose of _____."

4. Residuary Clause

"All the rest, residue and remainder of my estate, both real and personal, wherever situated, including any property over which I may have a power of appointment, I give, devise and bequeath to (*name of charity*), to be used for its general uses and purposes as directed by its Board."

We hope this information has been helpful! If you should have any additional questions, please contact Joe Stong in the Development Department at 1-800-626-6910.



Memorials

When sending in your memorial gift, please print all information. Please also include street addresses so that we can be sure to be accurate when notifying next of kin or friends of the deceased. For Special Memorial gifts of \$500 or more, you can have permanent recognition at our treatment center for your departed relative or friend, while providing a major gift to our work. Call our Development Department at 1-800-626-6910 for more information. Thank you and God bless you for your kindness! Memorials listed are from 11/30/10 to 2/24/11.

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GUEST HOUSE IS GROWING!

In addition to the creation of the new leadership position held by Denise Bertin-Epp as President and Chief Operating Officer, Guest House has added a number of employees and expanded programs to better serve the Church.

OUTREACH DEPARTMENT EXPANDS

Offering Even Better Service to Dioceses and Religious Communities

In an effort to increase and enhance dialogue between Guest House and Church hierarchy--and others concerned with the well being of clergy and religious--Guest House has significantly increased its communication and community efforts.

This is being accomplished principally through staffing increases in the Outreach Department. In recent weeks, the office has grown to include two positions responsible for increasing diocesan and religious community visits, as well as regionally connecting with our male and female alumnae around the country. Another contract position has been created as well, in order to form and facilitate alumni support groups in several communities around the U.S. and Canada.

Software Program to Foster Long-term Recovery

In Clinical Services, we are pleased to announce the implementation of a new software program called *OneRecovery*, which is designed to invite and accommodate communication between Guest House alumni and the Guest House clinical staff.

In the past 55 years, we have seen how important it is for our clients to "minister to each other." *OneRecovery* will dramatically increase this opportunity through active sharing of recovery progress. (For additional details of exciting growth at Guest House, click *Recent News* on the first page of our website, www.guesthouse.org).

Guest House wishes to express its most profound thanks to the following individuals who so graciously remembered us with gifts in their wills, received between November 29, 2010 and March 1, 2011.

Edward Cogley
James J. Cribbin
Rev. Stephen Dambrauskas
Rev. James F. Edwards
Richard T. Hall
Nicholas Hnath
Benjamin A. Karsokas
Kathryn R. Kuebler
Margaret M. Lydon

*Eternal rest grant unto them,
O Lord, and let perpetual
light shine upon them. May
they rest in peace, Amen.*

Mary E. Macksey
Marcia Meracle
Audrey E. Mohler
Amanda G. Maloney
William J. O'Brien
Rev. Stephen A. Sheetz
Anne Snee
John L. Vincius
John R. Warner

In Appreciation

Guest House acknowledges with gratitude the following permanent endowments and trusts which have been set up by donor friends.

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William H. Ryan, Sr. Memorial
Fr. Jim McKenna Memorial

For more information on gift-giving opportunities to assist Guest House in its apostolate, please contact Development, at 1-800-626-6910.

Sr. Patricia Proctor

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We moved a lot. By the time I was in the third grade I had moved nineteen times. When I graduated from High School I went into the Navy. I was there for three years as a Cryptologic Technician where I spent one year in Iceland and almost two years in Germany. When I failed a drug test I was removed from the Top Secret work I was in and sent back to the states for drug rehabilitation.

The program was about six weeks and though I did learn a lot from it, I was back doing both drugs and alcohol a week after the program. Thankfully I did not get caught again and left the Navy with an honorable discharge in August of 1978.

In 1979 one of my older brothers died very unexpectedly. At the

time he was the only member of our family still going to Church. I had been going through an atheist period but that swung me around and I decided that I wanted to make sure I ended up in the same place I knew my brother was. I came back into the Church and started going to daily Mass. In 1981, I entered the Poor Clares.

My period in the monastery before entering treatment was very good. I loved the sisters I was with and felt I was where God wanted me to be. I have always wanted to be a writer and for many years I was encouraged to follow this. As time went on I found myself taking on more and more activities that I now realize were addictive.

I didn't know when enough was enough. I published five books, had an extensive internet ministry and was managing a 24 hour radio station. I was always look-

ing to do a "new" project while keeping the old ones still spinning. If I had not been given the chance for treatment when I did I am not sure how long it would have been before everything crashed and I would have either jumped out the window (I was making more and more jokes about this) or cracked up.

I was beginning to have a lot of violent nightmares and Father Jim Van Vurst, OFM, my spiritual director said I needed to get to the root of them. My time at Guest House was not an easy time but it gave my life back to me. I learned my addictive personality was alive and well.

For 28 years although I did not drink or do drugs I was not recovered. I will always be grateful to my community for giving me the help I needed and for Guest House making that help available.



New Special Events Focus in Development Department

In fundraising, a Special Events Director position has been re-filled after the departure of the former director. We look forward to a new event portfolio, including a celebration to enhance our International "Friendship House" in Mangalore India.

Please Mark Your 2011 Calendar and Join Us!

Monday, May 16

20th Annual

Rochester Bishop's Reception

Rochester (MN) International Event Center

Monday, June 13

26th Annual Guest House Golf Classic

Indianwood Golf & Country Club

Lake Orion, Michigan

Tuesday, August 23

53rd Annual Detroit Bishop's Dinner

Detroit Athletic Club

Friday, September 9

Portland Bishop's Mass & Reception

Portland, Maine

Wednesday, September 28

Chicago Cardinal's Dinner

Vespers at Holy Family Church

Dinner at St. Ignatius High School

Thoughts on Surrender by Lee Anne Farrell, SSND

The following is a personal reflection on the concept of surrender. Now these thoughts are coming from a person who grew up in a time that when our country went off to war, there was no need to think in terms of stalemates or surrender. We were the United States and winning was the only option. My generation sang Frank Sinatra songs that stated "I'll do it my way." A famous movie of my childhood was "God is my Co-Pilot." That made me the pilot. The closest I'd ever come to knowing about losing, was the fact that I grew up on the North side of Chicago, and as such was a committed Cub fan, and until this day, we all live for "next year." Here are my musings.

It was at a time when I was struggling not just to live for next year, but live for the next day that I found myself as a client in a residential treatment center. It was here that the staff presented the importance of surrender for the recovery process to take place. Along with the need for surrender was the need to admit "we were powerless..." Well, why would being powerless be such a good thing? After all, women in our society were beginning to negate that description of themselves. They were taking gigantic steps in "breaking the glass ceiling." Women in the church I belonged to were beginning to make their voices heard. So why would I want to give up? Why would I surrender? Well for one thing, contrary to Frank Sinatra, I had known inwardly for a long time, that my way was not the way. Before treatment, I had changed the amounts, the times, the brands, the days, the flavors relating to my drinking habits. All was done in an attempt to drink correctly. Alas, all attempts were in vain. What was missing was the fact that I lacked the ability to give up the alcohol. I could not surrender. If I were to recover, I had to surrender to the power that alcohol exerted once it got into my system. It changed my behaviors, my value systems and my thought processes. In spite of those consequences, I was not willing to do this. I would not give up the substance. I would not surrender. I just wanted to drink correctly, like a lady.

So how did all that factor into my experience of recovery from my addiction. Well, I took it upon myself while in treatment, to say and do all the right things. Make no waves. Look good. Say little that could condemn

me to the reality that I had the disease of addiction (alcoholism). By the time I was considered appropriate for discharge, I had in my mind that I had indeed surrendered to this disease with all its shame and guilt that had been ravaging my body. If at that time you would have asked me to spell surrender, it would have looked like this: COMPLIANCE.

To reach the point of surrender, I needed to revisit what the treatment team had been saying about being powerless. It dawned on me that I had stalled and balked at the word powerless in the First Step and had kept it out of context. The English teacher in me realized one day that the word powerless was in fact defined by a prepositional phrase: over alcohol. A neon light went on in my head. Absolutely, I was powerless over alcohol, and my life had become unmanageable. This was the springboard to correcting my spelling error of earlier days. No longer would I spell surrender "compliance" as I previously had in my treatment days. Surrender became the only way to go. By now I was able to see that compliance did not bring with it the inner peaceful feelings that came with surrender. In fact, compliance was hard work. It was not authentic. Surrender to being powerless over people, places, situations brought with it a deep feeling of peace. It also challenged me to be accountable and responsible for my actions. It gave me the authenticity in my life that I had sought for in so many years of drinking.

Surrender, as I have come to know it and accept it, is a powerful, spiritual force in my life. But do not think for one moment, that if the Chicago Cubs win a pennant in my life time, that I would not spend my monies for a World Series ticket and willingly surrender to the fact that "next year" has indeed come to the North side of Chicago. Just as many next years have come to my life with the gift of recovery, I will raise my voice with the entire North side in gratitude that the miracle of recovery in my life provided the possibility that I lived to see that day on the North Side. Until then, I continue to live for next year, one day at a time. I've surrendered the pilot seat and have moved over to the co-pilot's seat. I know God is God and I am creature.

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- Management Services Offices, Lake Orion Treatment Center, and Recovery Residence Lake Orion, Michigan
- Rochester Treatment Center Rochester, Minnesota
- Guest House at St. John Vianney Downingtown, Pennsylvania
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