



Providing The Way



The Continuing Journey in Recovery.....

In the Gospel stories we find a number of resurrection stories and one such example is the parable of the Prodigal Son. We know how the Prodigal Son took his inheritance and squandered it. Then when he was destitute, suffering from hunger and rejection, walking close to the valley of death, he turned back to his father for forgiveness and reconciliation, and returned home. He returned to his father who he knew would welcome him with generosity and compassion. And when the elder son became angry over the generosity of his father, the father said, "But we had to celebrate and rejoice! This brother of yours was dead, and has come back to life. He was lost and is found." Luke 15:32

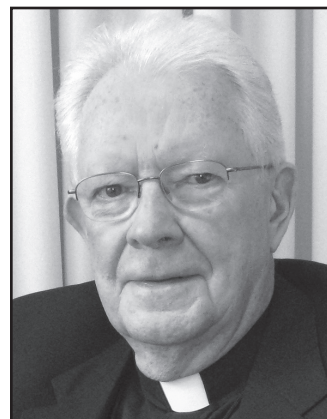
Like the parable of the Prodigal Son, the story of Jesus' resurrection reflects the patterns of our own lives. It is spun out of the fabric of our own existence. In this life of ours there are all those mysterious twisting and turnings that lead from life through the valley of the shadow of death toward a new creation. And always following, the joyous homecoming, the resurrection to new life.

Our resurrection stories are our encounters with the risen, living, real, presence of Jesus living among and within us. Our resurrection stories are often when we drift in our relationship with Jesus and lose our spiritual and moral bear-

ings. Our resurrection stories often involve a loss of hope as we find ourselves exhausted, seemingly depleted of all resources resulting from a crisis in our lives or just a gradual loss of our spiritual energies, our faith. Our resurrection stories might involve vocations, marriage, careers, children, loss of jobs, addictions, deaths and so many other aspects of our daily living.

Early in my religious life and priesthood, I found myself drifting away from my brothers in Holy Cross. Something was causing my resolve as a religious and priest to be undermined. I fulfilled the duties of my ministry; but I did so mostly outwardly and for show. I was decaying inside and the goodness and graces of my formation were slowly vanishing. I was not the person, priest, and religious that I wanted to be, but I was helpless to do anything about my dilemma. I was suffering from the addiction of alcoholism. I was walking in my own valley of death.

God, however, would not cease loving or pursuing me, much like the story of the Prodigal Son, and would not let me be destroyed by my grave failure to conform to His will. My brothers in Holy Cross sensed my dilemma and realized I was struggling with addiction. They



Fr. Charlie Kohlerman, CSC

confronted me with sensitive but tough love, getting me into treatment and onto the path of recovery. They showed me what community and commitment to each other really means: we stand by each other no matter how much we may have failed. They were the conduits of God's grace and love for me. They helped me to find my way through this valley of death to my own resurrection, to rekindle my relationship with Jesus.

My addiction constituted a major resurrection story in my life and the reality of that resurrection is, in no small part, attributable to my privileged experience of Guest House and my new life in Alcoholics Anonymous.

I entered Guest House in March of 1987 and this coming March, God willing, I will celebrate a most blessed moment in my Journey along the way of recovery, as the "token" I will receive from my AA family will read "25."



Fr. Charlie Kohlerman

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The Journey has been filled with blessings and not a few moments of pain, most often self-inflicted as my old “alcoholic self” tries to reestablish itself. But the journey has been privileged and humbling at the same time as I have been able to grow with the principles of AA as the foundation of my life, bolstering and nurturing my total self, physically, spiritually, religiously in a special relationship to my “higher power”, God.

My life and experiences of Guest House, both during my time of treatment in 1987 and continuing to the present, have continued to be my lifeline in my religious life and ministry. The counselors and staff of Guest House, through their care, love, and patience showed me the life that I had been called to by God and helped me to find the guideposts for that life principally through the 12 Steps of Alcoholic Anonymous. They have become the keys to my own religious life and priesthood.

Since leaving Guest House in June of 1987, I have spent 12 years working in retreat work and parish missions. I was then asked to become the Assistant Treasurer of our community, the United States Province of Priests and Brothers of the Congregation of Holy Cross and work as a chaplain in our seminary on the campus of the University of Notre Dame from 1999 until July 2003. I then

became the religious superior of our Medical Facility for priests and brothers here on campus. I spent the next six years working with my religious brothers who had need of assisted living or skilled care and during that time walked with 53 of our men in their final time as they prepared to go home to God, to live out their eternity in His gentle embrace.

In July of 2009 I finished my tenure as religious superior and returned to Moreau Seminary to the formation staff as chaplain to our seminarians, a wonderful calling that I continue to this day.

During these years since leaving Guest House, I have been blessed to do numerous retreats for recovering priests, sisters, and lay people both here in the Notre Dame area, but also as I traveled to other parts of the country and to Canada.

I also worked with Bob Martin from Guest House in presenting Guest House workshops in various parts of the country including at the Spirituality Center at Niagara Falls Ontario, Canada.

As I reflect back on the journey to recovery and new life that began when I entered Guest House in 1987, I am overwhelmed by all the blessings I have received and all of the ministerial opportunities that have been part of the journey. I am even more humbled by all of the wonderful people who have participated in and contributed to my journey to

allow me to be who I am and where I am today.

Guest House was a place with an atmosphere of hospitality and caring that embraced each of us so gently and so completely that we were unaware of the miracles that were happening. It was in Guest House that I truly committed to God as a religious and priest. Everything up to this time was a journey of detours, pitfalls, false promises, and wanderings that ended up in self destructive behavior hurting others and myself.

Giving retreats, both 12-step and others, could never have been a possibility if I had not gone through my own resurrection experience, learning what it meant to care for, and be compassionate for and to others. Dealing with issues of anger and resentment forced me to see life and the lives of others with a sense of reality that I gained only through my experiences at Guest House and the growth since.

Walking with young men in their discernment in their calling to religious life and the priesthood would have been a total impossibility without my being forced to discover my own inner life, my frailty, and my vulnerability and to confront the issues of my life.

Probably, the greatest and most blessed phase of the journey in recovery to date has

Detroit Bishop Leads All Souls Mass & Vigil

Our donors' loved ones remembered at annual event

Many thousands of names of the deceased family and friends of our donors were read aloud during an afternoon of prayer and reflection at the annual Guest House All Souls Mass & Vigil on November 2.

The 14th annual event, celebrated by Detroit Auxiliary Bishop Donald Hanchon, took place in the Chapel of our historic Scripps Mansion in Lake Orion, Michigan. Bishop Hanchon is the new Episcopal Moderator of Guest House. Sharing the Liturgy at the altar alongside the Bishop was Deacon Mike McKale from Holy Name Parish in Birmingham. Deacon McKale is Associate Director, Office for Clergy and Consecrated Life, Archdiocese of Detroit. There were about 70 Guest House benefactors, volunteers, staff, alumni and clients in attendance.

The All Souls Mass & Vigil is just one way we at Guest House can show our appreciation for the continuing prayers, friendship and support of our faithful donor friends.



Fr. Charlie Kohlerman

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been my tenure as religious superior at Holy Cross House, our religious medical facility here at Notre Dame. I can still remember my Provincial Superior asking me if I would consider being the superior and, more importantly, did I think I could find “quality of life” working with and guiding our “elder” priests and brothers. I had worked with my own dad in his later years and found the experience, at times, painful and frustrating as I suspect that my father may have been an alcoholic and he never seemed to find any real happiness in life.

However, after much prayer and guidance including discussions with some of my fellow recovering alcoholics, I learned to love

and care for these men, my brothers in community, using a model not unlike that of Guest House, accepting, understanding, and assisting each to be himself at this moment in his life, letting go of the past and journeying with God in the present. I continue to work with these priests and brothers, (elders, but also now peers as I am 76) cooking for them on bi-monthly outings to our conference and retreat facility about 30 miles from the Notre Dame campus. This journey in recovery and growth in my religious life and priesthood continues to open opportunities for me each day when I let God direct the journey and determine the destinations. I continue to attend AA meetings and find them nurturing and life giving. Each day part of my prayer life is AA readings and meditations.

Guided by the principles of AA and never forgetting my continuing Guest House experiences, I can continue to serve God and others humbled by all that this journey of recovery has allowed me to become and do. My life and work as a religious and priest have the priceless gift of recovery as their firm foundation. As the journey in recovery continues my gratitude for all that Guest House has done and is doing for me and continues to do for my brothers in Holy Cross and other religious, priests, and lay people suffering from the devastations of addiction becomes an incredible symbol of God’s love shown through such gifted and selfless people, the lay women and men who are the life blood of Guest House.





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 8/16/11 to 11/18/11.

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The NCCA

The *original* Catholic voice for supporting lay persons in recovery

Please Join!

The very first priest to ever experience the miracle of recovery in Alcoholics Anonymous in the 1940's had a vision: he saw a need to form an organization within Catholicism that would support the recovery of lay persons suffering alcoholism. That priest in recovery, Father Ralph Pfau, wanted to actively help the "flock" of the laity, so he founded the National Catholic Council on Alcoholism (NCCA) in 1949.

Father Ralph's legacy lives on 63 years later today as the National Catholic Council on Addictions.

Please consider joining with Father Ralph in this exclusive group of recovering Supporters of the NCCA. For just \$35 each year, you will receive or benefit from:

- Identification with the NCCA, the only organization of its kind today devoted exclusively to addictions education and advocacy for lay people;
- Timely and informative NCCA Newsletter;
- The NCCA website and all of its resources and links;
- Spiritually and recovery-oriented NCCA printed materials;
- Information regarding substance addiction ministry workshops for parish representatives or parish councils;
- A national conference (registration discounts available),* regional workshops and prison ministry resources for interested persons or parishes;
- Direct affiliation with Guest House and its mission to the Church!

*Please visit the NCCA website for information about the various Supporter levels available to individuals or organizations and parishes. Conference discounts are available with some Sponsorship levels.



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

Icon Dei Fall Luncheon + “Faith @ Work” Event Benefitting Our Patient Care Programs – and Lots of Fun Too!

Each year, a special group of Southeast Michigan friends bring together their talents, enthusiasm, and deep faith and love for our recovering clients to raise money for our patient care programs. Called “The Icon Dei Guild,” this caring group of women and men has raised *more than \$574,000 over the past four decades for Guest House.*

They do it in such fun ways! Each fall, for instance, they conduct their popular “Fall Luncheon and Boutique,” complete with baked goods, books, collectibles and jewelry sales followed by a delicious lunch and a brief program. Guest House alumni are frequently featured speakers, as are local clergy and religious, and Church leadership. In the

spring of each year, the Guild conducts its “Salad Luncheon.” Members and friends enjoy a unique variety of salads and desserts for a donation. The Guild also took part in “Celebrate Catholic Clergy Day” in November with a day-long jewelry sale fund raiser on our behalf. The event showcased costume jewelry at Faith @ Work bookstore in Troy, Michigan. An estimated 100 people stopped by to enjoy the sale which also featured a live Catholic radio station broadcast by nationally-renowned Al Kresta. Guest House alumnus Father Bill Riegel, CSB of Windsor, Ontario also took part in an interview.

Ten percent of all regular book and religious item proceeds also went to the Guild which, in turn, donated its portion toward our patient care programs.

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 August 23, 2011 and November 28, 2011.

- Helen I. Abbett
- Jean Aldana
- Rev. Michael J. Chonko
- Rev. Stephen Dambrauskas
- Paul F. Gabor
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- Rev. Kirby C. Hanson
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- Kathryn VanDam
- Rev. Milton H. Vanitvelt
- Rev. Donald B. Vernon
- Leonard A. Zielinski



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



Fall Luncheon



Jewelry Fundraiser



Prescription Drug Abuse

Prescription drugs are the second most commonly abused category of drugs. The National Institute of Health estimates that nearly 20% of people in the United States have used prescription drugs for non-medical reasons. Prescriptions for pain medication can be safe when taken according to the doctor's instructions and are carefully monitored. However, it is important to recognize they can also be very dangerous. Dependency is a disease that can exhibit itself to even the most cautious individual. Therefore, anyone who is prescribed pain medications should take extra precautions to avoid the effects of dependency and watch for the warning signs:

1. Usage Increase - It is common for individuals taking prescription medications to grow tolerant to the effects of their prescribed dose. If someone you know seems to be increasing their dose over time, this is an indication that the amount they were taking is no longer providing them relief.

2. Change in Personality - Shifts in energy, mood, and concentration may occur as everyday responsibilities become secondary to the need for the relief the prescription provides.

3. Social Withdrawal - May withdraw from family, friends and other social interaction.

4. Ongoing Use - Continued usage after a medical condition has improved will result in the person needing extensions on their prescription. The person might talk of how they are "still feeling pain" and need just a little longer on the medication in order to get well. They might also complain frequently about the doctors who refused to write the prescription for one reason or another.

5. Time Spent on Obtaining Prescriptions - A dependent person will spend large amounts of time driving great distances and visiting multiple doctors to obtain the drugs. Watch for signs that he or she seems preoccupied with a quest for medication, demonstrating that the drug has become their top priority.

6. Change in Daily Habits and Appearance - Personal hygiene may diminish as a result of a

drug addiction. Sleeping and eating habits change, and a person may have a constant cough, runny nose and red, glazed eyes.

7. Neglects Responsibilities - A dependent person may call in sick to work more often and neglect household chores and bills.

8. Increased Sensitivity - Normal sights, sounds and emotions might become overly stimulating to the person. Hallucinations, although perhaps difficult to monitor, may occur as well.

9. Blackouts and Forgetfulness - Another clear indication of dependence is when the person regularly forgets events that have taken place and appears to be suffering blackouts.

10. Defensiveness - When attempting to hide a drug dependency, abusers can become very defensive if they feel their secret is being discovered. They might even react to simple requests or questions by lashing out.

MOST ABUSED PRESCRIPTION DRUGS

The National Institute on Drug Abuse identifies three classes of prescription drugs that are most often abused.

OPIATES

Opiates are powerful drugs that are used to relieve pain. These narcotic pain killers go by such names as OxyContin, Darvon, Vicodin, Dilaudid, Demerol and Lomotil, and are often prescribed for post-operative pain.

DEPRESSANTS

Central nervous system (CNS) depressants have such trade names as Nembutal, Valium and Xanax. These drugs are used to treat anxiety, panic and sleep disorders and can be highly addictive.

STIMULANTS

Stimulants like Dexedrine, Ritalin and Adderall are used in weight loss treatment programs, to treat sleep disorders, and to aid those with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder. The health risks of abuse of stimulants include dangerously high body temperature, seizures and cardiovascular complications.

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- Management Services Offices, Lake Orion Treatment Center, and Recovery Residence Lake Orion, Michigan
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- Friendship House Mangalore, India

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