12 Steps@Trinity

Leap of Faith

December 9, 2021
Make use of what we offer...

...if not members of religious bodies we sometimes select and memorize a few sets of prayers which emphasize the principles we have been discussing. There are many helpful books also. Suggestions about these may be obtained from one's priest, minster, or rabbi. Be quick to see where religious people are right. Make use of what they offer.

~Alcoholics Anonymous Pg. 87

To us, the Realm of Spirit is broad, roomy, all inclusive; never exclusive or forbidding to those who earnestly seek. It is open, we believe, to all.

~Alcoholics Anonymous Pg. 46

12 Steps for All

1. We admitted that our lives had become unmanageable and uncontrollable.
2. Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.
3. Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood that.
4. Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.
5. Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being, the exact nature of our wrongs.
6. Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.
7. Humbly asked God to remove our shortcomings.
8. Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.
9. Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.
10. Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong, promptly admitted it.
11. Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood that, praying only for knowledge of God's will for us and the power to carry that out.
12. Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to others and to practice these principles in all our affairs.
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12-Step Spirituality is not a defined body of wisdom or particular collection of books and sayings. Indeed, the steps are rooted in a tradition much older and extending back millennia through the Judeo-Christian-Islamic religions. The Steps are now used by hundreds of different kinds of recovery groups and millions of people throughout the world. We could even say that 12-Step Spirituality is the combined knowledge and experience of all those who have used spiritual surrender and 12 Steps as a passage to recovery, and the things they have learned along the way. We are fortunate to include in our community many who have journeyed toward liberation with the 12 Steps and so we look to share what we have learned, as well as celebrate the presence of God in our midst.

A Centering Prayer

Let us pray together:

Gracious and eternal God, 
so draw our hearts to you, 
so guide our minds, 
so fill our imaginations, 
so control our wills, 
that we may be wholly yours, 
utterly dedicated to you; 
and then use us, we pray, 
as you will, and always to your glory 
and the welfare of your people; 
through Jesus Christ, we pray. Amen.

First Reading

Too often we let our fears prevent us from taking advantage of the opportunities God is sending our way. Part of our recovery is developing the trust that our experiences – both the painful and the joyful ones – are part of God's design for our growth. The paradox is that trust can come only when we plunge headlong into the opportunity that's beckoning, in spite of our fear and mistrust. This is the continual leap of faith we must make if we are to discover the full measure of joy that is meant for each of us.

Trusting others may seem difficult because of hurtful experiences in our past. But as we come to see the people who've hurt us as fallible, we can better accept our own handicaps and learn from them. Forgiving ourselves and others frees us to eventually trust God in every step we take, no matter how faltering.

Hear the Spirit as it speaks to us.
Amen.

Musical Interlude
Second Reading

Relying on our Higher Power to take care of us in every situation does not come easy for most of us. It may help at first to think in terms of making a decision. Just as we decide to use seat belts or to exercise before breakfast, we can decide to trust that the Higher Power who has safeguarded us up to now, will continue to do so.

There is a plan for our life, one that promises to be for our good. We know this intellectually, particularly on the days that flow smoothly. What’s harder to believe is that the rough days have their place as well. Even more, the rough days often prove to be the most rewarding.

Look back to a crisis that happened last month or last year. God never forgot us, even when we successfully blocked out our knowledge of God’s presence. Our ego often stands in the way of our well-being. Anyone may be God’s messenger and God may speak to us in the most commonplace event. God will get through to us when we’re open to God’s message.

Hear the Spirit as it speaks to us.
Amen.

First Prayer

Let us pray together.

My Lord God, I have no idea where I am going. I do not see the road ahead of me. I cannot know for certain where it will end. Nor do I really know myself, and the fact that I think that I am following your will does not mean that I am actually doing so. But I believe that the desire to please you does in fact please you. And I hope I have that desire in all that I am doing. I hope that I will never do anything apart from that desire. And I know that if I do this you will lead me by the right road though I may know nothing about it. Therefore, I will trust you always though I may seem to be lost and in the shadow of death. I will not fear, for you are ever with me, and you will never leave me to face my perils alone. Amen.

In God’s Care

— Thomas Merton

Today I will practice patience. I will ask, and trust, my Higher Power to send me His best.
Melody Beattie
Third Reading

Sometimes we think a life free of all turmoil would bring us total happiness. And yet experience teaches us that our burdens and conflicts push us to think creatively and to utilize the tools of our program. In the process of turning to others and to our Higher Power for clarity and direction, we grow. Our progress is timely. All our experiences – the tough ones along with the joyful ones – provide the lessons we need to prepare us for the opportunities that will arise in the future.

Our Higher Power doesn't intend for us to experience pain. We are given freedom by God to choose a path where our attention is focused on ourselves rather than on our Higher Power. Our pain and suffering arise as we learn the futility of self-will. We can then turn within for the wisdom that immediately frees us from unnecessary pain and reclaim the serenity that is ours every time we acknowledge God as our companion.

Hear the Spirit as it speaks to us.

Amen.

Second Prayer

Let us pray.

Dear God, why do I keep fighting you off? One part of me wants you desperately, another part of me unknowingly pushes you back and runs away. What is there in me that so contradicts my desire for you? These transition days, these passage ways, are calling me to let go of old securities, to give myself over into your hands. Like Jesus who struggled with the pain I, too, fight the “let it all be done.” Loneliness, lostness, non-belonging, all these hurts strike out at me, leaving me pained with this present goodbye. I want to be more but I fight the growing. I want to be new but I hang onto the old. I want to live but I won’t face the dying. I want to be whole but cannot bear to gather up the pieces into one. Is it that I refuse to be out of control, to let the tears take their humbling journey, to stay with the insecurity of “no home”?

— Joyce Rupp

In God’s Care

Man needs difficulties; they are necessary for health.

Carl Jung

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Now is the time. You call to me, begging me to let you have my life, inviting me to taste the darkness so I can be filled with the light, allowing me to lose my direction so that I will find my way home to you. Amen.

Musical Interlude

Reflection

The reflection seeks to be evocative not prescriptive, so there is no expectation that you will agree with the homilist. Instead, allow the reflection to lead you into your own contemplation and feel free to follow your own inner voice rather than remaining focused on what the homilist is saying. Sometimes our journeys converge and sometimes they diverge. Enjoy!

Meditation

The meditation will be a brief period of quiet to allow us to center and quiet the mind. Please feel free to participate with whatever method you prefer.

Reconciliation, Release, and Reclamations

A Thursday@7 tradition, you are invited to come forward and symbolically offer your prayer for the reconciliation of a fractured relationship, the release of a resentment, or the reclamation of lost hopes and dreams.

Shared Reflections

The Serenity Prayer

Let us pray together.

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;
enjoying one moment 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;
that I may be reasonably happy in this life
and supremely happy with you in the next. Amen.
The Peace
The earliest Christians shared a kiss or embrace as a sign of solidarity and reconciliation among those in spiritual community with one another. We continue that tradition with a common greeting:

The Peace of the Lord be always with you.
And also with you.

The Lord’s Prayer
Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy Name,
thy kingdom come, thy will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory,
for ever and ever. Amen.

Financial Support
Your financial support is not only a practical necessity. It can also be a very meaningful symbolic gesture, expressing your gratitude for all the blessings in your life and your hope for health in the world.

You can place cash or a check in the big blue urn at the head of the aisle or you can donate online here, text TRINITYBUFFALO to 73256, or send a check to:

Trinity Episcopal Church
371 Delaware Avenue
Buffalo, NY 14202

Thank you for your participation and contribution. Peace.

Troubles are often the tools by which God fashions us for better things.
H.W. Beecher