

12 Steps@Trinity



What About Feelings?

August 20, 2020

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, minister, 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.

12 Steps@Trinity

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

When I began studying the Seventh Step, which says, “Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings,” my list of shortcomings included an extensive catalogue of feelings. I humbly asked God to remove my anger, fear, and guilt. I looked forward to the day when I would never experience any of these emotions again.

Of course, that day never arrived. Instead, I have learned that feelings aren't shortcomings. The true nature of my problem was my stubborn refusal to acknowledge feelings, to accept them, and to let them go. I have very little power over what feelings arise, but what I choose to do about them is my responsibility.

Today I can accept my feelings, share about them with others, recognize that they are feelings, not facts, and then let them go. I'm no longer stuck in a state of seemingly endless rage or self-pity, for when I give myself permission to feel whatever I feel, the feelings pass. My emotions have not been removed; instead, I have been relieved of shortcomings that blocked my self-acceptance.

Hear the Spirit as it speaks to us.
Amen.

12Steps@Trinity is offered as a worship experience rooted in the spiritual wisdom of the twelve-steps, which themselves are rooted in the ancient spiritual exercises of St. Ignatius.

Courage to
Change

*Cover image:
Conwy Castle,
Wales by
Jennifer Frey*

Second Reading

When I first came into the Twelve Step program, I thought that anger, resentment, jealousy, and fear were “bad” feelings. The program has helped me to learn that feelings are neither good nor bad – they are simply a part of who I am.

Courage to
Change

I have come to realize that good has sometimes come as a result of those feelings. Anger has prompted some constructive changes in my life. Resentment has made me so uncomfortable that I’ve had to learn to combat it – as a result, I have learned to pray for other people. Jealousy has taught me to keep my mouth shut when I know I will say only irrational, destructive things. And fear has been perhaps my greatest gift, because it forces me to make conscious contact with my Higher Power.

Now that the negative has become the positive, I am better able to accept the whole picture. There is no more need to judge or hate myself just because I experience a human feeling.

*My feelings are
neither right
nor wrong but
are important by
virtue of being
mine.
... In All Our
Affairs*

Hear the Spirit as it speaks to us.
Amen.

First Prayer

Let us pray together.

Thank you for all I forget are gifts,
not rights.

Forgive me for all the grievances
I remember too well.

Save me from the self-pity,
the self-seeking,
the fat-heartedness
which is true poverty.

—Ted Loder

Guide me, if I’m willing
(drive me if I’m not)
into the hard ways of sacrifice
which are just and loving.

Make me wide-eyed for beauty,
and for my neighbor’s need and goodness;
wide-willed for peace-making,
and for the confronting power
with the call to compassion;
wide-hearted for love
and for the unloved,
who are the hardest to touch
and need it the most.

Dull the envy in me which criticizes
and complains life into a thousand ugly bits.
Keep me honest and tender enough to heal,
tough enough to be healed of my hypocrisies.
Match my appetite for privilege
with the stomach for commitment.
Teach me the great cost of paying attention
that, naked to the dazzle of your back as you pass,
I may know I am always on holy ground.
Breathe into me the restlessness and courage
to make something new,
something saving,
and something true
that I may understand what it is to rejoice. Amen.

Third Reading

Our feelings are bigger than we are. The love, sorrow, fear, or rage that any one of us feels at any moment is just a thin slice of a great stream of feeling that runs through all of humanity. To experience strong emotions in a crowd, for instance, takes us out of ourselves.

Mob anger can be viciously destructive. Mob joy can be transcendent. The difference between one individual and the mob is that each one of us can choose, every moment, what we will do with our emotions. We can feel rage and choose to express it without harm. We can feel sorrow and survive it. We can choose to dwell with feelings that console and enhance our spirits, and we can choose to let go of those that diminish us.

With feelings, as with everything else, the law of life is change. We shall not always feel as we feel now. If we accept our feelings as they come, and try to feel them fully as we are able, we shall become more unified with our fellow human creatures, and with all existence.

Hear the Spirit as it speaks to us.
Amen.

The Promise of a
New Day

*"I would not
exchange the
laughter of my
heart for the
fortunes of the
multitudes;
nor would I be
content with
converting my
tears . . . into
calm. It is my
fervent hope that
my whole life on
this earth will
ever be tears and
laughter."
Kahlil Gibran*

— Mary
Mrozowski
(popularized
by Thomas
Keating)

*Feelings may not
be comfortable,
but that does not
make them bad.
With a change of
attitude, I have
choices about
what to do with
my feelings.
Anything can be
used for my good
if I allow it.
Courage to
Change*

Second Prayer

Let us pray together.

Welcome, welcome, welcome.

**I welcome everything that comes to me today
because I know it's for my healing.**

**I welcome all thoughts, feelings, emotions, persons,
situations, and conditions.**

I let go of my desire for power and control.

**I let go of my desire for affection, esteem,
approval and pleasure.**

I let go of my desire for survival and security.

**I let go of my desire to change any situation,
condition, person or myself.**

**I open to the love and presence of God and
God's action within. 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!

Candle Lighting and 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.

Sharing 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.**

*They say that
pain is inevitable,
but suffering
is optional. If I
learn to accept
that pain is part
of life, I will
be better able
to endure the
difficult times
and then move
on, leaving the
pain behind me.*

**The Promise
of a New Day**

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