

12 Steps@Trinity



Richard Rohr Advent

December 24, 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.

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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.**

*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.*

Thoughts on the season of Advent, keeping the Twelve Steps in mind, greatly paraphrasing Richard Rohr from his book *Preparing for Christmas - Daily Meditations for Advent*.

First Reading

Before recovery, before surrender and a relationship with a Higher Power, life can be a kind of deliberate emptiness, a kind of chosen non-fulfillment. Perfect fullness (read serenity) is always to come, we do not need to demand it now. This keeps the field of life wide open and especially open to grace and to a future made possible with a Higher Power rather than by our-selves (alone). This is what it means to be “awake.”

We can use other “a” words for Advent: aware, alive, attentive, alert, awake are all appropriate! Advent is above all else, a call to full consciousness and a forewarning about the high price of consciousness.

When we demand satisfaction of one another, when we demand any completion to history on our terms, when we demand that our anxiety or any dissatisfaction be taken away, saying as it were, “Why weren’t you this for me? Why didn’t life do that for me?” We are refusing to hold out for the full picture that is always a part of a relationship with the Higher Power.

A relationship with the Higher Power is a leap into the kind of freedom and surrender that is rightly called the virtue of hope. The theological virtue of hope is the patient and trustful willingness to live without closure, without resolution, and still be content and even happy because our satisfaction is now at another level, and our source is beyond ourselves. We are able to trust the Higher Power in our private dilemmas and in our personal suffering.

Reflect: What expectations and demands of life can you let go of to make room for hope and serenity?

Second Reading

The American Declaration of Independence says we have an “unalienable right” to the pursuit of happiness. The Higher Power wants us to be happy and joyful and free, right now. The only difference between the two is that any happiness that is demanded from life never becomes happiness because it is too narcissistically and self-consciously pursued. The “joy that the world cannot give” always comes as a gift to those who wait for it, expect it and make room for it inside themselves. The first is self-assertion, the second is self-surrender. The first is taking; the second is receiving. Those are two entirely different human dynamics. You do not catch a butterfly by chasing: You sit still and it alights on your shoulder. Then it chooses you. That is true happiness.

Reflect: Today, living in recovery, what brings you happiness?

I cannot understand my own behavior. I fail to carry out the very things I want to do, and find myself doing the very things I hate. . . for although the will to do what is good is in me, the performance is not.
Romans 7:15, 18

First Prayer

Let us pray together.

**O come, O come, Emmanuel, and ransom captive Israel
that mourns in lonely exile here until the Son of God appear.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee O Israel.**

Third Reading

When we set out to seek our private happiness, we often create an idol that is sure to topple. Any attempts to protect any full and private happiness in the midst of so much public suffering have to be based on illusion about the nature of the world we live in. We can only do that if we block ourselves from a certain degree of reality and refuse solidarity with “the other side” of everything, even the other side of ourselves.

Both sides of life are good and necessary teachers; in fact, failure and mistake teach us much more than our successes. It takes struggle with both our darkness and our light to form us into being an emotionally mature person. We especially resist any form of suffering (read loss of control). Suffering and solidarity with the suffering of others has an immense capacity to “make room” inside of us. It is probably our primary spiritual teacher.

Reflect: What attachments in your life can you let go of to make more room for the Higher Power in your day today?

Second Prayer

Let us pray together.

We struggle, we grow weary, we grow tired. We are exhausted, we are distressed, we despair. We give up, we fall down, we let go. We cry, we are empty, we grown calm. We are ready. We wait quietly.

A small shy truth arrives. Arrives from without and within. Arrives and is born. Simple, steady, clear. Like a mirror, like a bell, like a flame. Like rain in summer. A precious truth arrives and is born within us. Within our emptiness.

We accept it, we observe it, we absorb it. We surrender to our bare truth. We are nourished, we are changed. We are blessed. We rise up. For this we give thanks. Amen.

Musical Interlude

— Michael
Leunig

*God desires
nothing more
than our
happiness and
wills the healing
of our disease.
Richard Rohr
Breathing
under Water*

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.**

*We think we are
our thinking,
and we even take
that thinking as
utterly “true,”
which removes
us at least two
steps from reality
itself. We really
are our own
worst enemies.
It seems humans
would sooner die
than change or
admit that they
are mistaken.
Richard Rohr
Breathing
under Water*

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.**

*We suffer to
get well.*

*We surrender
to win.*

We die to live.

*We give it away
to keep it.*

**Richard Rohr
Breathing
under Water**

Financial Support

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Thank you for your participation and contribution. Peace.

Save the Date: February 24, 2021 On that Wednesday, at 7pm, Trinity will host a Zoom appearance from Debby Irving, author of "Waking Up White: And Finding Myself in the Story of Race." While in her 40s, a graduate course in "Race and Cultural Identity" started Irving on her journey to comprehend how much she had benefited over the years because she was white. Irving writes plainly and clearly about her discoveries and how she began to question her long held assumptions about race and culture. We encourage you to read the book though it is not a requirement. Info on tickets to come.

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