

IMPORTANT  
HELPLINES/  
HOTLINES



If you are having thoughts of suicide, if you need mental health-related crisis support, if you are worried about someone else, PLEASE CALL OR TEXT **988** or visit the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline chat to connect with a trained crisis counselor

### PARISH SUPPORT GROUPS

- ◆ **Calix Society—The Church of Incarnation, 240 Main St. Mantua—EVERY Monday—ZOOM-8PM**
- ◆ **Community Connections The Church of Incarnation, 240 Main St., Mantua—EVERY Saturday—In-Person & ZOOM—9:30 AM**  
Contact: Bill Dougherty at 609-617-9959
- ◆ **For more information about these ministries or how to start an addiction healing support ministry in your parish, call JoAnne Farrell at 856-342-4057.**

# Addictions Healing & Recovery Newsletter

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The Catholic theme for the month of February is traditionally dedicated to the Holy Family. The Holy Family speaks to the reality of every family. The love of God is shared with Joseph and Mary, and their love participates in the Divine Love. Focusing on the Holy Family, the role model of all families, helps to become communities of love and reconciliation, where tenderness, mutual help and mutual forgiveness happens.

This is challenged when addiction enters. Addiction affects the entire family. As the disease of addiction develops and intensifies, family life tends to become chaotic. Family members may not know what to expect from day to day and may begin feeling helpless to change the situation. Families may experience problems including: Emotional struggles. The good news is that while families often bear the burden of the consequences of their loved one's substance use disorder, they can also play a huge role in their family member's recovery.

Dr. L. Stanger, in *Addiction in the Family*, tells us that when talking with someone who has a substance use disorder, it's important to remember that their brain is not the same as yours.

You are speaking to a hijacked brain. It is important to wait until the person has some semblance of sobriety to talk; share your feelings in a thoughtful, compassionate way; and, whenever possible speak to your loved one with more than one person present. Family members can learn to respond without reacting and think about what they will say. Use non-blaming "I" statements and feelings. Stick with what they have seen, heard and observed—just the facts—when talking with their loved one. Live in ways that promote transparency, vulnerability, and healing.

Catholic families can help their loved one in recovery by attending family therapy/support groups, avoid enabling behaviors, and support the decision to seek treatment.

All are invited to join Community Connections Support Gathering every Saturday morning, either in person or online at 9:30 AM. The in-person meeting is held at Incarnation Parish, 320 Main Street, Mantua NJ. This is a non-traditional support gathering of parents, friends, families impacted by addiction, and persons with substance use disorders in recovery. Contact Bill Dougherty at 609-617-9959 or Jo Anne Farrell at 856-342-4057 for more information.



## **Judith's Journey**

***"Do not be deceived. Bad company ruins good morals."  
Corinthian 15:33***

***"For the Grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age." - Titus 2:11-12***

When the devil attacks, he is so clever and tricky that a lot of times we don't even actually feel the downward spiral that our very lives are in. It's because he is patient and will pick away at a person little by little, slowly taking everything that is good and that we cherish out of our lives. I felt I was in some sort of state of amnesia. I wasn't able to feel like I remembered exactly how I felt before the addiction. It was as if I felt like life was always completely terrible no matter what. So, things seemed to be not good, but okay enough that I didn't realize or was in denial about my life taking such a dark turn into addiction. It sort of felt like something I would like to be different someday or that I'll have to work on some day, just not anytime soon. And then I would just go from there and slip deeper into denial, depression and hopelessness as time went on. Sealing the deal, I thought I would never try to get sober, at least not completely. I thought for sure I couldn't do it. It was just too hard.

That is exactly how addiction wants us to feel. Down and out and ashamed and angry about everything. The longer I stayed in the dark, the harder it was to try to remember ever feeling somewhat happy with my life. So, I just slipped further and further down until I just could not stay in my own skin anymore with or without drugs. It didn't matter. I had an urgency that I was at the end of my rope and couldn't go on that way anymore. I totally broke down and I thought whatever I have to do to feel better, I will do it. Nothing can be as bad as the way I felt.

*Grateful  
Thankful  
Blessed*

I didn't know it then but now I see that God blessed me with the gift of desperation. Now six years later I realize that there is only one reason that I still breathe air into my lungs.

That is to tell my story the best I can and let the Holy Father guide me in getting His word to as many souls as possible; to save souls in Jesus' immaculate holy name; to keep walking in His direction and not to look back or be discouraged; to keep holy His name and keep up daily worship to the Almighty Savior; to consistently pray for courage to do His work and stay strongly willing to hear His words to me and take directions from Him and to change my life accordingly as I go along and always speak God's truth as boldly and not to be intimidated by the ungodly. I have to say that this is no easy task. It's a total surrender to God's word because He is the only truth. To let Jesus guide me and give me the right words to say to help as many people addicted or not. I have to keep my armor on at all times to protect God's word in my life. It's not for me, it's for Him. It's not my words. It's His words passing through me for the salvation to save as many souls as possible. I am His vessel.



I stopped asking God for things to change around me, and I have surrendered to Him for love, mercy and guidance. So that I may speak the word of God and show that I am proof of a miracle. Anyone who knew me back when I was in my addiction can see for themselves the miraculous changes in my life as a whole. I am an example of actually coming back from the dead. I never in my life could have imagined my life today. My life is not perfect but it is a perfect enough for God to work His way in and through me so perfectly. I am His sacred vessel. I was perfectly broken for Him. I am honored. What gratitude, respect, love and adoration I have for the Holy Father. He made an example of me for others to receive His message of salvation and repent accordingly to His judgement. This sacred gift is there for me as long as I am consistent and loyal to His word. I am not trying to say I am perfect. I am saying that I will imperfectly do the very best I can and when wrong promptly admitted it and try again to change my life to live in holiness, appreciation and adoration of the King of the world. I am showing my love to God by following His Almighty direction.

By: Judith Quinton Arthur



Catholic Charities  
South Jersey