12 Steps@Trinity

Seeing With New Eyes

April 13, 2023

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.

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.

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.

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.

People who lean on logic and philosophy and rational exposition end by starving the best part of the mind.

J.B. Yeats

First Reading

In God's Care

It's a bitter pill to swallow, but our intelligence only gets in the way when we're dealing with things that really count: our feelings and how we express them.

Love is the be-all and end-all. If we are capable of loving, we have nothing to worry about. If we're having trouble expressing our loving nature, our priority must be to remove the barriers. One of those barriers is our belief in the overriding importance of our intelligence.

Intelligence is like good looks; they are both unearned. And we can be sure that our Creator does not evaluate us on the basis of how intelligent we are. If we ask, God will help us overcome our reliance on our intelligence and all other handicaps that keep us from expressing love.

Trust in the rightness of timing, and the freedom at the other end, as you struggle humanly through this spiritual experience.

Growth begins when we start to accept our own weakness. Jean Vanier

Hear the Spirit as it speaks to us.
Amen.

Musical Interlude

Second Reading

Days of Healing
Days of Joy

There is a good bit of truth in the old saying, "Tell me your strengths, and I'll tell you your weaknesses." Every plus has its flip side. Efficient people, for example, may tend to be so organized that they can come up with an answer before they hear the question. In the program, these sturdy souls often set about fixing their character flaws quickly. Then, just as quickly, frustration sets in. Their quick-fix problem-solving techniques always worked before. Why should this be different?

Highly intelligent people may tend to be arrogant and impatient. All their lives they have wondered why others are so slow to catch on. But when recovery calls for wisdom instead of intelligence, they're beside themselves with irritation. They've gotten A's all their lives, so why can't they figure this one out? How can it be that smart isn't right?

Most of us think of our strong points as our treasures. It may be we would learn something if we check out the other side of the coin.

Hear the Spirit as it speaks to us.
Amen.

First Prayer

Let us pray together.

Praise be to you, O Lord, for life
and for my intense desire to live;
praise be to you for the mystery of love
and for my intense desire to be a lover;
praise be to you for this day
and another chance to live and love.

— Ted Loder

Thank you, Lord,
for friends who stake their claim in my heart,
for enemies who disturb my soul and bump my ego,
for tuba players,
and story tellers,
and trapeze troupes.
Thank you, Lord,
for singers of songs,
for teachers of songs,
who help me sing along the way
... and for listeners.

While philosophers tend toward universals and poets love particulars, mystics and contemplative practice teach us how to encompass both.
Richard Rohr

Lord, grant me grace, then,
and a portion of your spirit
that I may so live
as to give others cause
to be thankful for me,

thankful because I have not forgotten
how to hope,
how to laugh,
how to say, "I'm sorry,"
how to forgive,
how to bind up wounds,
how to dream,
how to cry,
how to pray,
how to love when it is hard,
and how to dare when it is dangerous.

Undamn me, Lord,
that praise may flow more easily from me
than wants,
thanks more readily
than complaints.
Praise be to you, Lord, for life;
praise be to you for another chance to live. Amen.

Not everything that can be counted counts, and not everything that counts can be counted.
Albert Einstein

Third Reading

To begin to see with new eyes, we must observe—and usually be humiliated by—the habitual way we encounter each and every moment. It is humiliating because we will see that we are well-practiced in just a few predictable responses. Not many of our responses are original, fresh, or naturally respectful of what is right in front of us. The most common human responses to a new moment are mistrust, cynicism, fear, defensiveness, dismissal, and judgmentalism. These are the common ways the ego tries to be in control of the data instead of allowing the moment to get some control over us—and teach us something new!

To let the moment teach us, we must allow ourselves to be at least slightly stunned by it until it draws us inward and upward, toward a subtle experience of wonder. We normally need a single moment of gratuitous awe to get us started.

—Richard Rohr

The spiritual journey is a constant interplay between moments of awe followed by a process of surrender to that moment. We must first allow ourselves to be captured by the goodness, truth, or beauty of something beyond and outside ourselves. Then we universalize from that moment to the goodness, truth, and beauty of the rest of reality, until our realization eventually ricochets back to include ourselves! This is the great inner dialogue we call prayer. We humans resist both the awe and, even more, the surrender. Both are vital, and so we must practice.

Hear the Spirit as it speaks to us.
Amen.

Second Prayer

Let us pray.

We pray for the fragile ecology of the
heart and the mind. The sense of meaning
So finely assembled and balanced
and so easily overturned.
The careful, ongoing
construction of LOVE.
As painful and exhausting
as the struggle for truth
and as easily abandoned.
Hard fought and won
are the shifting sands of this sacred ground,
this ecology.
Easy to desecrate and difficult to defend,
this vulnerable joy, this exposed faith,
this precious order.
This sanity.
We shall be careful.
With others and
with ourselves.
Amen!

— *Michael Leunig,* A Common Prayer

Life truly lived is a risky business, and if one puts up too many fences against risk one ends by shutting out life itself. Kenneth S. Davis

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.

How do I feel today? How am I doing? If I can answer those questions truthfully, I am more likely to pursue the help I need and to share happy times with others as well.
Courage to Change

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.

You can also donate by scanning this QR code:

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