

Dr Joseph Pursch:

We All Suffer from Alcoholism

By John Dash
A pioneer in the rehabilitation of alcoholics told a Rochester audience of about 500 last week that our entire country is suffering from alcoholism.

By "suffering from alcoholism," Dr. Joseph Pursch, chief of the Alcohol Rehabilitation Center in Long Beach, Calif., means every person whose life is

marked by contact with either alcohol or an alcoholic.

Dr. Pursch, a psychiatrist, is a proponent of family therapy for alcoholism, a relatively new means of treatment, and one which is being sponsored by the Rochester chapter of the National Council on Alcoholism under the title of "Make a Miracle Happen."

He told his audience at

Our Lady of Mercy High School Auditorium that alcoholism is not only a "disease, but a community illness."

"Is it a communicable disease?" he asked. "I suspect that. I can't help but think that it is," he said.

He told the gathering the story of an airline stewardess whose alcoholic husband's behavior had caused a radical change in her own behavior. "Even though she only had an occasional drink of alcohol," he said, "she was the one who went into rehabilitation."

The tale was a harrowing one of a woman who would refuse certain assignments so that she could keep an eye on her husband's drinking, who was so distraught over her life that a stranger's mere mention of the word "alcohol" brought her to weeping.

In Dr. Pursch's understanding of the disease, "an unplanned disaster" in his words, several areas are affected: family life, social life, economic life, occupational life, and physical, mental and spiritual well-being.

And yet, with the disaster of the disease, "Many alcoholics don't get real sick. Most alcoholics die with beautiful livers, and never get sick at all."

How do alcoholics die?

Dr. Pursch listed a number of statistics:

"Seventy-two per cent of the knife murders are alcohol-induced. . . ; 71 per cent of the accidental poisonings; 67 per cent of the child molestations. . . ; 64 per cent of all homicides. . . ; 58 per cent of fire deaths, especially hotel fire deaths. . . ; 56 per cent of the home fights; 55 per cent of shootings; 55 per cent of auto deaths; 48 per cent of accidental drownings."

"There are no boating accidents," Dr. Pursch said, "but alcohol accidents."

"It is important to realize that alcoholism is a family disease," he said. "Family members compensate for the alcoholic, they accommodate the alcoholic, enabling him not to change."

His therapy, however is to enable the family to "make the changes for the alcoholic to change."

He asserted again, we all fall into one of two categories: either alcoholic or "co-alcoholic."

"Make a Miracle Happen," the family education program on alcoholism, has sessions slated in Rochester on a regular basis. The phone number is (716) 271-3540.



Hawaiian New Year

Planners for the Bishop Kearney High School Hawaiian New Year's Eve Party, slated for Monday, Dec. 31, beginning at 8 p.m. followed by dancing to Freddie Beck's Orchestra, are, left to right: (standing) Dick Prinzing, Bob DeClerck, Ralph Miller; (seated) Sheila Prinzing, Dottie DeClerck, Rosemiriam Miller, Ursula Hurysz, and Shirley McCoy.

Americans Named For Talks

Vatican City (RNS)—Two Americans have been named to the special ecumenical commission which will seek to pave the way for eventual reunification of the Eastern Orthodox and Roman Catholic Churches.

The two are Cardinal William Baum, Archbishop of Washington, D.C. and Father Frederick R. McManus, a canon lawyer who is vice provost and dean of graduate studies at Catholic University of America, also in Washington.

All in the Family

By Sarah Child

Reader Offers Information On Poem

Dear Ms. Child:

After reading your column in the Nov. 28 issue of the Courier-Journal I had to write to you.

I am very familiar with the poem you printed. I first saw it a few years ago hanging in a friend's room when I was in college. Ever since then, a copy of it has hung in my family's kitchen.

The title of it is "At Day's End" and it was written by a man by the name of John Hall. And there are a few more lines to it than you have printed, so I'm enclosing a copy of my version for you. I hope I've been of some help.

God Bless you.

Sincerely,

Christine A. Tolle
Rochester, N.Y.

For those readers who might want to clip the verse and put it up we reprint the poem in its entirety. Thanks Christine.

AT DAY'S END
By John Hall

Is anyone happier
Because you passed his way?
Does anyone remember
That you spoke to him today?
This day is almost over
And its toiling time is through
Is there anyone to utter now
A kindly word of you?
Can you say tonight in passing
With the day that's slipping fast
That you helped a single person
Of the many that you passed?
Is a single heart rejoicing
Over what you did or said?
Does one whose hopes are fading
Now with courage look ahead?
Did you waste the day or lose it?
Was it well or poorly spent?
Did you leave a trail of kindness?
Or a scar of discontent?
As you close your eyes in slumber
Do you think that God will say
"you have earned one more tomorrow
by the work you did today?"

Two other readers also supplied the title of the poem and added the missing two lines. I thank Linda A. O'Donnell of Rochester and Salvatore Parlato who wrote that Joan Dickson, editor of the Parents Newsletter for the Rochester School for the Deaf, just ran the same poem in the November issue.

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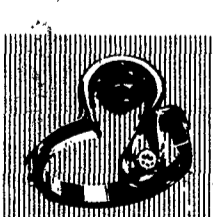
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THOUGHTS TO CONSIDER

"Finding Needs to Fill"



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As a friend or relative who wants to be of help to the bereaved, you often have to take the initiative in finding needs to fill. Offer to answer the telephone, write notes or make calls to those who need to be notified. If you have a spare room, make it available to overnight guests of the family. If there are children in the family, make arrangements for them to be taken care of during the funeral preparations. As funeral directors, we can take care of many of the family's needs at this time, but nothing can take the place of loving friends and family. Your concern at the time of death — and through the months that follow — will help fill the emptiness as nothing else can. We can offer suggestions of other needs the family may have — please contact any member of our staff.

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