

# Healing

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Even more promising is the role the church can play in the latter stages of recovery, by developing creative ministries that express our most basic reality as church.

Another woman who came to us, "Jenny," is not an addict, but she suffers from codependency — the condition of being a part of the disease of dependency on mind-altering substances through one's relationships with others. She has been through treatment for battered women, and has been a faithful Al-Anon member for five years. She is struggling to raise four children who have suffered with her in their dysfunctional family life.

Jenny's children are having a lot of behavioral problems. She finds she is always yelling at them, and has trouble touching or affirming them. She wants a better way of life.

At Theresa Center, we offered a meditation group for mothers, focusing on heal-

ing the child within each of us. One evening, Jenny met her "child of the past," a little girl whom she did not want to touch. She wanted to yell at this child, to shape her up.

After six months of working in this form of group prayer (along with other support programs), Jenny was able to begin embracing and nurturing the child within her. "I can finally come close to her," she murmured after meditation one night as a tear silently spilled down her cheek. "I finally want to see her and touch her. I even want to hold her."

As Jenny broke into gentle sobbing, two women rubbed her back softly, telling her, "You are all right; you are being healed. It will be all right now."

Meanwhile, in another part of the church, Jenny's seven-month-old child was being rocked by a loving woman whose need to mother made this task a great joy. Jenny's older daughter attended another group that used creative storytelling, puppets and artwork within a religious-education format to build her self-esteem.

It is so simple for the church to offer such programs for recovering families because they stem from our deepest sense of who we are and what we are about. But while such efforts come from the heart of the church's healing, life-giving work, they also point out flaws in who we are as church and what we are about.

Our traditional models of ministry have failed to directly acknowledge and minister to the overwhelming problem of dependency. To a large extent, we have mistaken addiction for a character weakness.

What we actually have is a disease, and the healing process involves far more than ceasing to take a particular substance. Even after several years of sobriety, for in-

stance, Jenny, had many personal issues from her childhood with which she was dealing for the first time.

Our churches often provide space for Alcoholics Anonymous meetings, but we can do much more to integrate those who are recovering into our church communities. Our traditional programs do not reach out to overcome the alienation that is part of the disease of addiction. The pain and suffering that comes with the disease makes it difficult for people, even those well into the recovery process, to take part in religious education or sacramental preparation as we commonly present them.

Just as we do with the divorced and separated or the mentally handicapped, we need to creatively present our standard catechetical material in ways meaningful to

those who are recovering from the disease of addiction.

Addiction not only ravages the poor, but affects all our parishioners — all church members. Alcohol abuse alone touches an estimated 75 million lives, according to *Healing the Shame that Binds You*, a recently published book by John Bradshaw.

More than being our responsibility, however, ministry with the alienated and marginalized — especially the addicted — is a gift to church, an act of grace that helps us re-evaluate our religious and social values and liberates us to live more fully in the image of Jesus Christ.

Effective ministry to the addicted gives witness to the church as the new Messianic people unmasking the powers of death to transform society.

## Sr. Rita McGrath, SSJ, teacher for 60 years

ROCHESTER — Sister Rita Marie McGrath, SSJ, who taught at diocesan schools for more than 60 years, died Monday, April 2, 1990, in the St. Joseph's Convent Infirmary. She was 90 years old.

A Mass of Christian Burial for Sister McGrath was celebrated in the motherhouse chapel on April 4. The Mass was celebrated by Fathers Edward Zimmer and Thomas Florack and Monsignor William Shannon. Interment was in the sisters' section of Holy Sepulchre Cemetery.

One of eight children born to Peter and Martha (Twamley) McGrath, Sister McGrath entered the Sisters of St. Joseph from Blessed Sacrament Parish in 1916. After studying at Nazareth Normal School, she obtained a bachelor of arts degree

from Nazareth College.

Among the schools at which Sister McGrath taught were: St. Francis Xavier Blessed Sacrament, and St. Ambrose, all of Rochester; St. Mary, Canandaigua; St. Patrick, Corning; and St. Paul, Oswego.

"Sister Rita ... was a teacher whose personal interest in her students is well remembered by all," said Sister Kathleen Klier, SSJ, who noted that most of Sister McGrath's career was spent teaching at the seventh-grade level. "In a quiet, unassuming way, she was a steady influence in the lives of her pupils."

Her last assignment was at Our Lady of Good Counsel School in Rochester. She later retired to St. Joseph Convent and Infirmary in 1981.

Sister McGrath is survived by one sister, Marcella Weider, as well as several nieces and nephews.

## Al Sigi Center seeks piano

Because the Al Sigi Center in Rochester has recently expanded to a second location, a music program which serves clients is in need of a donated piano.

Volunteers are seeking an upright or spinet piano in good condition, able to maintain concert pitch with workable action and good castors for ease in moving.

Please contact Howard S. McGee if you have a prospective donation at 716/292-5159.

# CLASSIFIEDS

## GENERAL

### Card of thanks 2

**ST. JUDE**, Lord, Blessed Mother, St. Joseph; thank you for prayers being answered. M.C.

**THANKS TO** St. Jude, Blessed Mother, and Sacred Heart of Jesus for favors received. P.M.

### Miscellaneous 9

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Country Cooking  
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Bake Sale  
Donation \$2.00

### Books 28

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**Priest Stories**  
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### Wanted to buy 37

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### Furn. apartments for rent 57

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