



Father Peter Young's Glidepath News

Peter Young
Housing, Industries &
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Happy Holidays

Love – The Ultimate Gift

A Holiday Message From Father Peter Young

The holiday season is upon us once again. The stores and malls are filled with people shopping for gifts and preparing for their annual gathering with family and friends. For most of us, the season is one of joy and celebration and, most of all, gratitude for the many gifts that life has been gracious enough to bestow upon us. A roof over our head, freedom from hunger, freedom from financial worry, and health and happiness for ourselves and our loved ones. Yes, there is so much to be thankful for.

And yet, as the years have advanced, I can't help but notice the change in the core meaning of Christmas from that of a spiritual celebration to one more concerned with the material things that our bounteous society has to offer.

To me, there is something larger than us in this life. And I am concerned when I see half empty cathedrals and houses of worship, manger scenes banned from the public square, prayer forbidden in schools, and a country where faith apparently has become increasingly separated from morality. And most of all, I worry about those that society seems to have forgotten, especially the downtrodden and those without access to the halls of power which can provide the help and assistance to improve the plight of those desperately in need.

Our country was founded on the premise that virtue is connected to religious belief, in whatever form or version it may manifest itself for each individual. Piety has to be an essential ingredient in our daily lives. And piety comes from your heart.

Yes, Christmas has become more than simply a religious experience. But that is not necessarily a bad thing as long as we look deeply into our hearts and rediscover the true state of mind that Christmas represents for those of all faiths and glorify in its rightful meaning.

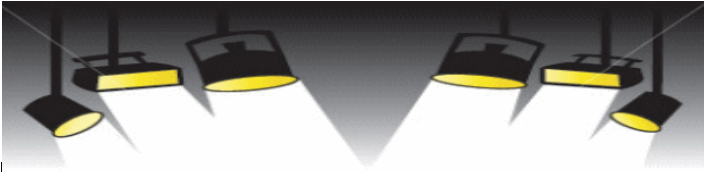
Certainly, we can give some electronic device or gift card as a present. Or we can give something much more precious and lasting. We can also give of ourselves and help restore dignity and self-esteem to someone who has lost their way in life.

For the vast majority of us this is a season of joy. But for those afflicted by the disease of substance abuse and those who are homeless, Christmas is just another day of desperation, loneliness, and despair. There are no presents under the tree. There is no holiday feast awaiting them. There are no friends or family waiting with open arms.

I ask you to look deep into your hearts. If life provided you with health, financial security, and a loving family, then rejoice in your deserved bounty and share the gifts that God has given you with those who are so much less fortunate. Donate your time. Donate your money. Donate your heart. Help me help others. Think beyond just the material world and give the ultimate gift – the gift of love. When you allow just one person escape the chains of addiction you will reap rewards a hundred fold. In this life and the next. Let us not forget that the Christmas heart is a giving heart that thinks of others first. And the joy you give to others is the joy that comes back to you. So please open your hearts and rejoice in the true spirit of the season.

A blessed holiday season to all my friends,

Father Peter G. Young

*** * PYHIT Spotlight * *****Christmas At The Monastery
Annual Fund Raiser Exceeds Expectations**

Schenectady, NY - Following up on the huge success of last year's Christmas event, friends and parishioners of Father Young from Bolton, NY held the **2d Annual Christmas At The Monastery** fund raiser at the Monastery in Schenectady, NY on December 1, 2007.

This year's event took the form of a live auction orchestrated by Martin Seelye who donated his valuable services and evaluations of the items. Mr. Seelye put on an "exhilarating" display of his professional auctioneering skills that those in attendance will not soon forget.

A spectacular array of Christmas trees and ornaments, wreaths, Nativity figurines, and many other holiday items which were hand-crafted by local artisans were available and their obvious craftsmanship led to them selling out quickly.

A spectacular buffet was prepared and served by PYHIT's Executive Chef Richard Toth, his staff, and the Culinary Arts students from the Schuyler Inn and included a Breakfast Station, a Pasta Station, and a Carving Station that the attendees raved about.

Many thanks to the Committee Members who organized the event, all of whom volunteered their considerable time, expertise, and energy to make this year's event an enormous success. Members of the Committee include John Consaga (Chairman), Pat Nugent, Donna Langan, Ann Marie Senese, Kathy Spahn, Suellen Franz, Pat Van Valkenburgh, Kathie and Craig Hannon, Rich Toth, Pater Kelsey, and Jackie Gentile.



Special thanks also to Kathie Sousa, the Parish Life Director at the Blessed Sacrament Church in Bolton, who donated her own oil painting, to Cate Mandigo who donated signed original prints, and to Dick Ouellette from Adirondack Furniture who was extremely generous with his time and donations. Thanks also to Pat Nugent who labored long and hard behind the scenes to make all the necessary preparations for the auction.

The event was a festive affair enjoyed by all in the large crowd and was a real tribute to Father Young, his programs, and his mission to help those less fortunate. Father expressed his deep gratitude for the hard work, long hours, and dedication of all the organizers and donors and for the assistance their efforts will bring to our needy clients.

All proceeds benefit the Peter Young Foundation, a charitable organization that provides services and programs for the poor and homeless.

We Need Your Support

This is the season when many worthy causes are asking for your help. The demands and choices can be daunting. But we fervently believe that Father Young's PYHIT programs more directly and more efficiently affect and improve the lives of thousands of needy individuals who are trapped in the vice of addiction or who are homeless and without any safe haven to turn to. And there are no administrative fees with donations to PYHIT - every penny goes to help the needy. Please consider us for a donation. Any amount you can spare is greatly appreciated. Please send your contribution to:

**The Peter Young Foundation
428 Duane Avenue
Schenectady, NY 12304**



Addiction: Tragedy or Atrocity?

Understanding Addiction

While great strides have been made in recent years in the way addiction is viewed by the general public, a recent arrest of a prostitute in Schenectady brought into stark relief that many misconceptions about the disease of addiction still abound.

Normally, a story such as this would barely rate a mention even in the local media. But the woman in question also had her infant daughter with her at the time of arrest and also at other times while using drugs. These salacious details turned the story into a regional news event, and it was cited in major news outlets from New York City to the Chicago and Cleveland media markets.

The woman was vilified in the press. Even learned people who have dealt with the addicted population for decades as part of their professional duties castigated the woman and claimed that her actions were nothing short of "atrocious."

Yes, her acts viewed in a vacuum were indeed horrific. But the vital aspect that was never fully explored was the fact that the woman was an addict.

Addiction, by its very definition, means that the person has lost all choice in their behavior and actions. The drug or other substance takes control of the mind, body, and spirit of the afflicted individual.

No one wakes up one day and decides to become an addict. And no addict ever makes the conscious decision to harm their child or others. Those who are addicted have lost all control over their life. And that is the fundamental tragedy of addiction. Only

one thing matters to them – their drug. It is a compulsion that they can no more resist than anyone with a disease can resist their symptoms.

What was glaringly missing from the coverage of this event is that addiction too is a disease and the impaired individual is no more responsible for its effects than any other person who is ill or physically incapacitated. The woman in question was raised in an upper class family and had all the advantages of life within her reach. Not that that guarantees immunity from addiction; quite the contrary. Addiction reaches every social and economic status. No one is immune.

We are not making excuses for this woman. But it is clear that addiction is still misunderstood in many quarters. We cannot emphasize strongly enough that for those who are addicted, the drug controls you in ways that compel you to act in ways you know are wrong; to do things to yourself and others that you would previously have never imagined possible.

Addiction is mentioned so often these days that it has become almost sanitized. But obviously there is still much more to do to educate others about the true nature of the torment and agony inherent when you lose control of all your knowledge and perceptions of what is right and wrong - when you are compelled beyond all control to harm yourself and others.

The lesson from those of us in the field of substance abuse treatment is that instead of maligning or denigrating those that suffer from addiction, we must work harder than ever to teach others about the true nature of addiction and continue with renewed vigor to provide the treatment and support the addicted desperately need and restore them to a life of dignity, humanity, and self-respect.

Drug Abuse and Addiction: Understanding the Signs, Symptoms, and Effects

What is drug abuse?

Drug abuse, also known as substance abuse, involves the repeated and excessive use of a drug to produce pleasure or escape reality despite its destructive effects. Although legal substances such as alcohol and nicotine certainly can be and are abused, when we talk about drug abuse, we tend to think of two kinds of situations:

- Use of illegal substances such as marijuana, cocaine, or heroin.
- Misuse of legal substances such as prescription drugs or fumes from household products.

In such situations, even a small amount of an illegal or improperly consumed substance can alter how your brain works, and if you can't function normally under the influence of that substance, its use constitutes abuse. More dangerously, the short-term effects of the drug (whether they involve euphoria, extra energy, sensory enhancement, or heightened performance) tend to become so alluring that the drug takes over the user's life, disrupting his or her relationships, work, and peace of mind.

How drug use can lead to addiction

You cross the line from drug abuse to drug addiction when using drugs stops being a choice and becomes a necessity, when it controls you and not the other way around. You're convinced that the drug is necessary for you to have a feeling of well-being or even just to get through the day. Your craving for your drug of choice crowds out most other thoughts, and your pursuit and use of the drug become what takes up most of your time. Nothing is more important than getting high; not your job, not your kids, not your spouse, not your folks. Getting high, in fact, becomes so important that you're willing to sacrifice your work, family, and home, even as you deny that you have a problem.

Signs and symptoms of drug abuse and addiction

Substance abusers are often the last ones to recognize their own symptoms of abuse, dependence and addiction. Even when they know they have a problem, drug abusers often try to downplay their drug use and conceal their symptoms. But if you suspect that a friend or loved one is abusing drugs, there are a number of warning signs you can look for the following symptoms:

Behavioral symptoms of drug abuse

- Angry outbursts, mood swings, irritability, manic behavior, or overall attitude change
- Talking incoherently or making inappropriate remarks
- Risky behavior, such as driving under the influence of drugs, starting a fight, or engaging in unprotected sex
- Secretive or suspicious behavior: frequent trips to the restroom, basement, or other isolated areas for privacy while using drugs
- Deterioration of physical appearance and grooming
- Frequent absences from work or school; drop off in quality of work or grades
- Neglect of family responsibilities
- Evidence of money problems: frequent borrowing, selling possessions, or stealing items from employer, home, or school
- Legal problems rooted in drug use: arrest for driving under the influence, possession of a controlled substance, disorderly conduct, or stealing
- Using drugs first thing in the morning
- Estrangement from old friends and loved ones
- Associating with known drug users and dropping friends who don't use drugs



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- Abandoning or spending less time on activities such as hobbies, sports, and socializing
- Loss of appetite, abnormal weight loss
- Poor concentration, confusion

Physiological signs of drug abuse

When a qualified health professional prescribes a medication and the patient for whom it is prescribed uses it ***as directed***, that use does not become abuse. Abuse enters the picture when someone takes too much of a medication or takes it too long or too frequently or takes it when it is not prescribed.

Drug abuse also destroys relationships and careers, as users' concerns shrink to obtaining and using their drugs of choice. A drug habit is usually expensive, and drug abusers may turn to criminal means of income if their salaries don't cover expenses. When poor performance at work or discovery of the drug habit leads to termination, the temptation to steal is heightened. Child neglect and abuse are endemic among drug abusers. Friends, relatives, and partners get fed up with being borrowed from, stolen from, lied to, and, often, subjected to violence or danger, and they leave.

Why people use and abuse drugs

It's a matter of brain chemistry. In one way or another, almost all drugs over stimulate the pleasure center of the brain, flooding it with the neurotransmitter dopamine. That produces euphoria, and that heightened pleasure can be so compelling that the brain wants that feeling back again and again. Unfortunately, with repeated use of a drug, the brain becomes accustomed to the dopamine surges by producing less of it, so the user has to take more of the drug to feel the same pleasure - the phenomenon known as tolerance.

But what causes people to want to try drugs in the first place? Some are thrill-seekers, some just curious; some try drugs because their friends use, or they want to be perceived as cool. Even more susceptible, though, are the many people who use drugs in order to cope with unpleasant emotions and the difficulties of life.

People who are suffering emotionally use drugs not so much for the rush but to escape from their problems. They're trying to self-medicate themselves out of loneliness, low self-esteem, unhappy relationships, stress, and many other types of problems. Drug use doesn't solve any of those problems, and it can easily make them worse or create new ones. But even if the user knows that, the short-term escape drugs provide can be so attractive that the dangerous consequences of abuse can seem unimportant.

Finally, remember that the earlier you catch the problem, the more effective treatment will be and the more likely it is that the treatment will stick.

Note: This is an abridged version of an article reprinted courtesy of HELPGUIDE.org. Please visit that site for the full version.

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