



The Pastor's Corner



from the pastor

May Is Mental Illness Awareness Month

Thanks to Patricia O'Reilly for passing on links to some excellent articles. Here is a sample:

excerpts from: **How Catholics Struggle With Mental Illness**

by Anna Weaver for US Catholic (Feb. 2010 issue)

at: <http://www.uscatholic.org/node/5811>



Not long after Rich Salazar moved to DeKalb, Illinois, he found himself knocking at the door of St. Mary's Church. The then-college student had recently been diagnosed with bipolar disorder and was in crisis mode. Unable to reach his mother at work and not knowing where else to go, Salazar told himself, "I have to go to church." Father William Schwartz answered his knocks and invited him in. "He talked to me, calmed me down," Salazar says. The priest called his mother and told him he could stay at the church as long as he needed. He was very kind.

For many Catholics experiencing mental illness and their families, the church can be both a place of welcome and alienation. Just as society has struggled with how to deal with those with mental illness, U.S. parishes and dioceses have found the area equally challenging.

The National Institute of Mental Health estimates that one in four Americans has a mental disorder. Of those, one in 17 has a serious mental illness such as major depression, schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, obsessive compulsive disorder, panic disorder, post-traumatic stress disorder, or borderline personality disorder. ... those large numbers mean that every Catholic is affected by mental illness in some way. "The people next to you in the pews may have a mental illness or have family [members] who have mental illness,"

Author Therese Borchard writes about how guilt has played a large role in her own struggles with bipolar disorder in her new book, *Beyond Blue* (Center Street). But she also says that Catholicism is the perfect tradition for those with a mental illness. "I think the Catholic faith, especially with all its traditions and rituals, can give you a kind of safety," Borchard says. "I joke that there's a saint for every disorder, and if you run out of saints there's always St. Jude for hopeless causes."

Connie Rakitan, a member of the Archdiocese of Chicago's Commission on Mental Illness, is the founder of Faith and Fellowship, a support group for people with severe mental illness. She thinks there's been a vast improvement in the "sensitivity and sophistication" of understanding mental illness, but that church outreach in that area has taken more time compared to the outreach to those dealing with physical disabilities. "It is way easier to build a ramp than it is to deal with a person who comes to church talking to herself, which might be a manifestation of some of the more severe symptoms of mental illness," she says. "I don't think that the church is ready for that yet."

another valuable resource: **Kanawha County Quick Guide of Teen Resources**

http://www.unitedwaycwg.org/documents/quick_guides/kanawhaquickguideTEEN.pdf

Solemnity of the Ascension of the Lord

Parish Office Staff Positions



Last week I wrote that Sandy Williams, our office manager of 24+ years will retire in mid-July. Amy Ricketts, who has assisted Sandy with a variety of office tasks would also like to move on. This means that we need to hire one or more persons to take over the wide variety of tasks that Sandy and Amy have performed so well, including but not limited to: receptionist, secretary, financial bookkeeper, payroll manager,



church records keeper, librarian, supervisor of janitors, office management, building and grounds oversight, church calendar updating, bulletin composition, preparation of required diocesan reports, etc. I would like to talk with any parishioner who might be interested in being hired to take over one, several or all of these tasks. We can be flexible about the days and hours required. A desirable candidate must approach the job as a ministry and as an important part of the mission of our parish. A criminal background check is required as part of Safe Environment certification required by our diocese. Please contact me by phone or email if you are interested.

Diocesan Information

Our diocese recently presented Information Sessions on the Pastoral and Sacramental Life of the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston in each vicariate. The excellently prepared power point slides that were part of the presentation are now available, as promised, for anyone to view via a link on the main page of the DWC website (www.dwc.org). I highly recommend them for your consideration!