

THE ADDICTIONS RECOVERY MINISTRY  
OF THE DIOCESE OF LOUISIANA  
ANNUAL REPORT 2015

The Addictions Recovery Ministry is a specialized ministry of this diocese and a local affiliate of the Recovery Ministries of the National Episcopal Church. This ministry welcomes recovering people into the Episcopal community and also helps recovering Episcopalians find a home within the organized church. Within the diocese, the Addictions Recovery Ministry provides education, guidance, and support for families and parishes struggling with, or wishing to learn more about, addiction. In this context, the term “addiction” means a relationship with any activity or substance that interferes with healthy functioning including but not limited to alcohol, drugs, relationships, sex, work, gambling, or food.

The Commission met quarterly in 2015 and conducted Celebrations of Life in Recovery which include a pot luck lunch, an open 12 Step meeting, and a 12 Step worship service open to all. We would like to hear from any parish interested in hosting a Celebration of Life in Recovery or sending a representative to a Commission meeting.

A handful of parishes in the diocese, including St. Alban’s in Baton Rouge and St. Andrew’s in Bayou Du Large, held Recovery Sunday events in 2015. The Commission is available to assist the clergy of the diocese with the celebration of Recovery Sunday events during Eastertide as recommended by a 2011 diocesan resolution. The members of this ministry will make themselves available to the congregations in the diocese as a resource for those dealing with addiction in any form. We are able to participate in educational programs at parishes and at clergy events whether through special presentations, personal testimonies, Sunday school classes, or other Recovery Sunday events. We have materials and resources available that would free the parish clergy from the necessity of developing their own Recovery Sunday programs. If a parish or group would like to host a recovery-related event, please contact Lance Armstrong in Baton Rouge at 225-216-9083.

The Addictions Recovery Ministry held our two annual retreat weekends for people in, or interested in, recovery - a co-ed Mixed Weekend in August and a Women’s Weekend in January.

The Solomon Center was filled with 86 attendees for the Women's Weekend on January 9-11, 2015. The theme for the weekend was “Emotional Sobriety”. Our retreat leader, Polly Pistole shared the wisdom found in some of Bill W.'s letters about Emotional Sobriety and how she has taken her sobriety to a new level by studying what Bill had to say. Emotional Sobriety is mentioned 17 times in the first 164 pages of the Big Book. Polly will look at how character defects such as approval addiction, intolerance, resentment, anger, jealousy, fear, sarcasm, blame, and many others affect our emotional sobriety; and how practicing good habits and making them part of you can restore our balance. “Repetition will strengthen and confirm and Faith will then come naturally.” The retreat schedule included the following:

- A Eucharist incorporating the 12 Steps celebrated by Mtr. Dee Dee Estes to open the retreat
- Time for spiritual direction and reconciliation
- A Taizé service of healing with anointing and music on Saturday evening
- Bible Study
- 12 Step meetings
- Opportunities for meditation while walking the labyrinth
- A Morning Prayer service incorporating the 12 Steps to close the retreat

The 32<sup>nd</sup> annual Mixed Weekend for men and women took place on August 7-9, 2015, at the Solomon Episcopal Conference Center with 57 attendees. Retreat leaders, Deacon Linda and Lance Armstrong, explored where AA's 'design for living' came from and what the early AA's read before the Big Book was written. One of AA's founders, Dr. Bob, said that one of the "essentials" was the Book of James. The retreat presented the principles and practices in James that became part of the 12-Step foundation and its literature. Through discussion and small groups, participants considered how to apply them in their daily lives with the challenge to not just stop practicing their addictions and psychological dependencies, but also to learn how to live in freedom from the bondage of self. James provides the practical framework and guidelines that have worked for over 2000 years to let believers live happy, joyous, and free. The retreat schedule included the following:

- A Eucharist incorporating the 12 Steps celebrated by Mtr. Dee Dee Estes to open the retreat
- Time for spiritual direction and reconciliation
- A Dream Workshop led by Martha Tennison
- A Taizé service of healing with anointing and music on Saturday evening
- Bible Study
- 12 Step meetings
- A Morning Prayer service incorporating the 12 Steps to close the retreat

The Commission is grateful to all those who made these Weekends possible, from Solomon Center staff to our facilitators, and our chaplain. The retreats have been a reflection of God's grace and a source of spiritual nourishment for the participants.

Additional information regarding this ministry is available on the diocesan website at [www.edola.org/ministries/arm](http://www.edola.org/ministries/arm) . Should you have any questions concerning the Addictions Recovery Ministry for yourself or your parish, please contact Lance Armstrong in Baton Rouge at 225-216-9083.