

Faith Partners essay for the Anchor - April 2007

Editor's note: Beginning this month, members of House of Hope's Faith Partners team will share personal essays on addiction and recovery.

Easter: The Promise of New Life on Earth

“For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.” Romans 8:38-39

Easter has always been my favorite holiday. Growing up at House of Hope Church, I loved the sounds, smells, mystery and jubilation of Easter, long before I understood the message of resurrection.

As an adult, Easter is rich with meaning and hope for me. It was Easter Sunday morning when I prayed silently in my pew at House of Hope. Four days later, I found myself in treatment for alcoholism at Hazelden.

Today in healthy, God-given recovery, Easter represents the promise of life after death *and* the promise of new life on earth.

I was what is often called a “high-functioning alcoholic.” I was active in community service, ran a small business, had a wide circle of friends, attended church regularly, paid my bills on time. I was physically fit and seemingly healthy. My “surface” looked good, but my insides were tortured with anxiety, fear and shame. I used alcohol as a temporary fix. Ultimately, drinking became an addiction.

I believed that because I was not doing God’s will, I wasn’t worth His attention and care. But I understand now – as Romans 8 says – God is always present for us.

A wise, recovering person said “If you think God has left you, ask yourself, ‘Who moved?’” It was I *who moved* as I fell deeper into my addiction. Until I could believe that God’s love was always present for me, I could not recover.

Addiction is a destructive relationship with a substance, activity or person. It might be alcohol or drugs. It might be gambling, eating, excessive work, even a loved one. Whatever it is, that addiction makes a person’s life unmanageable. At times like this, we probably feel the most distant from God.

But at times like this, God is most present for us. That is how I found my way to Hazelden one Easter season.

Today, my most important priorities are to be honest, open and willing. One day at a time. That is how I stay in recovery, with God's help.

In the Twelve Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous, Steps 2 and 3 offer the assurance that we are not alone. Step 2 says: "Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity." Step 3 says: "Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God *as we understood him.*"

In recovery, I learned that there is nothing – not even active addiction – that can separate me from the love of God. And – if I can be honest, open and willing each day – I have a pretty good shot at understanding and acting upon God's will for me. I don't do it perfectly. I never will. But I won't stop trying.

For me, Easter will forever symbolize this promise of resurrection and new life on earth.

Carol Pine is a member of Faith Partners at House of Hope Church.

The Faith Partners Ministry serves the needs of our congregation, and the broader community, by addressing addiction in our midst. Faith Partners provides educational programs, resource information, outreach and support to people affected by addiction.