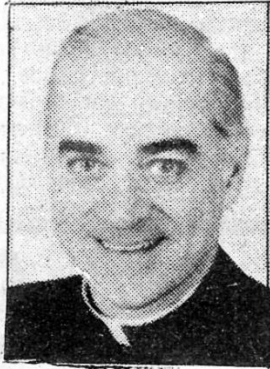


Father John Catoir

# Dealing with Stress

There are two kinds of stress: physical, which is relatively rare, and psychological, which is now reaching epidemic proportions. One out of three Americans suffers from psychological stress. In fact, more than 50 billion pills are sold each year in the U.S. alone to deal with stress. Fifty thousand emergency room cases are reported each year involving overdoses of tranquilizers.



What causes stress? The answer is simple: the world around us and our reaction to it. Pollution, traffic jams, family discord and money problems all take their toll. Can religion help in any way? Yes, our faith offers the best safeguard against stress and needless worry.

When we react to our environment with excessive fear and anger we set the stage for trouble. The first symptoms of stress are physical, like backaches or headaches. Next comes grumpiness and self-doubt. Finally unrelieved stress can lead to that depression which Webster defines as low spirits, gloominess or sadness. Admittedly, some forms of depression are due to chemical imbalances and are beyond the reach of a positive spirituality, but a strong faith in the Risen Jesus can help you deal with stress before it ever reaches the depression stage.

By the grace of God I have never taken a tranquilizer in my life, and I rarely take an aspirin. That doesn't mean I do not experience stress. Living in New York City and coping with endless deadlines can be daunting, but my faith teaches me the importance of joy.

The greatest honor you can give to

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So many people compound their problems by needless worry. Living in God's presence can change your perspective.

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almighty God is to live gladly because of the knowledge of His love. Being grateful to God in all circumstances is an act of worship, and I make that a top priority in my life. I may not always succeed at being joyful but more often than not I manage to concentrate on God's love rather than on my own distress.

So many people compound their problems by needless worry. In stressful situations, if you can manage to hold on to the belief that God died for you and that He delights in loving you, it will do wonders for your emotional well-being.

Living in the presence of a loving God can change your entire perspective on life. For instance, if someone irritates you, try to shrug it off; laugh at yourself for allowing something so trivial to sour your spirit. The key is in controlling your thoughts. No one has direct control over their feelings. Be patient with your moods, they will pass in time. If you keep your thoughts focused on the promise of eternal happiness your feelings will follow.

*[For a free copy of the Christopher News Notes, Gratitude, send a stamped, self-addressed envelope to The Christophers, 12 E. 48th St., New York, N.Y. 10017.]*