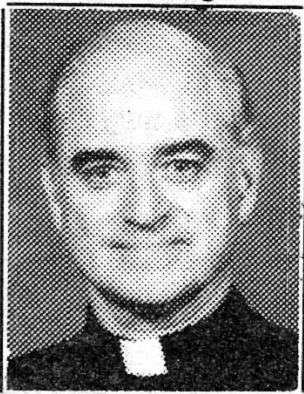


Depend on God

Too much independence can get you into heaps of trouble. Forget the historical battle for American independence, I'm talking about day-to-day independence, where you forget to call upon God. You're dead in the water if you try to go it alone.

If you're having trouble coping with a serious problem ask yourself these questions



suggested by the late Father Anthony de Mello in his book, "Sadhana — A Way to God" (p.129):

What part am I giving to God in the solution of the problems that I am dealing with? How much am I relying on Him in solving them? How much trust do I have in Him?

IT'S QUITE NORMAL to dive into the difficulties of life with sleeves rolled up, ready to do battle like a noble warrior, but too often we try to do too much on our own. Some of our worries are merely irksome, some are really painful and occasionally we have to confront problems that are deeply disturbing and tenacious, like an alcoholic spouse or a child on drugs.

Most people cope as best they can, asking for the strength to carry on, but they never assign a specific role to God in the solution of the problem.

God loves you more than any lover on earth could ever love you. He knows your most secret thoughts. What would happen if you brought the problem to Him in a more imaginative way, not just praying to make

the person change, a salutary prayer, indeed, but asking for grace to use this time as an opportunity to your own personal growth in holiness?

Here's a sample prayer for you to think about:

Lord, you told us to love our enemies, turn the other cheek, return good for evil. I can't do that. I'm always flaring up in anger. I don't want to become a doormat. I must stand up for my rights. But I can't seem to get out of this situation without becoming furious. Please help me. Change me. Strengthen me. Teach me to concentrate on myself, on my own reactions. Let me live my life first and foremost to please You, without worrying about changing the other person. If I can change myself, maybe it will bring forth good results in helping to change him/her.

THERE IS NO possibility of making another person change to suit you. They must decide to change themselves or there is no hope. However, if you call on God to guide you in determining those areas you can control, you have a chance for success. Ask the Lord to help you to take responsibility for your own actions in a way that will conform to His will.

If you feel powerless over a problem, turn it over to Him, the one who has all the power. Let go of it, and hope for the best. The other person may sink or swim. You can't swim for him/her. You've got to risk it.

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