



Father John Catoir

## Letter to A Wounded Friend

Dear

I know you've been deeply hurt and disillusioned by the events of your life. You're terribly fearful of being hurt again. You say you're seeing a therapist, but it's not helping and you begin to sink deeper into a sea of self-doubt.

May I offer a bit of friendly advice? Break the self-pity syndrome before it's too late, and get out there and do something positive to reverse the trend as soon as possible.

Counsellors may work for hours to help you talk about all those bad feelings, and this is a necessary first step, but verbal ventilation is not enough. People will tell you to fight against those negative feelings, but repressing emotions does little to help you through the dark night. What you really need to do is expand your horizons and give yourself some new options.

**YOU'RE IN A RUT** of self-blame because you think you've figured out what happened to you, but you're wrong. Beware of having a too pat interpretation of the events of your life. Some of it may be true, but some of it, you can be sure, is not. Don't believe the myth you're creating about yourself. You're like a child who blames himself for his parent's divorce. It's a truncated view of reality. There's greatness in you and you are not seeing it. You have a good heart and a willing spirit and that is your noblest self; your true and beautiful soul.

Here's what I think you should do. Identify a problem out there in the world around you and get involved doing something about it. Give help where real help is needed. Get yourself out of the rut of being the wounded recipient of care and make a decision to become a provider of care. At first, it will take a tremendous effort, But it will make a big difference in your outlook.

Arthur Egendorf, in his excellent book, "Healing From the War," (Houghton, Mifflin Co., Boston, 1985) described this formula as the one which worked best for the traumatized guilt-ridden veterans of the Vietnam War. "Giving ourselves to others is the best antidote to what diminishes our humanity."

Remember, also, it isn't so much what you do, it's what you allow the Lord to do through you. I'll pray for you. Please keep me in your good prayers.