

Major and Minor Addictions

by Father John Catoir, JCD - Jan.14, 2019

A few years ago, I wrote a column on the topic of the “Cell-Phone Addiction.” Today I’m expanding my focus to include addictions of every kind. It’s a well-known fact that minor addictions can disrupt your life, but major addictions can destroy your life.

People are glued to their I-pods, cell-phones, I-Pads and computers. They text messages all day long, and in the process lose their ability to engage in art of conversation, while never developing the art of writing. Fewer and fewer people, young and old write letters any more. This is sad but not fatal.

Parents are out of their wits trying to get their children’s attention. If you investigate the problem of cell-phone addiction, you’ll be amazed to learn that many nations are way ahead of the U.S. in dealing with it. For instance, South Korea is the most wired country in the world. They have internet-counseling centers where youngsters are taught to combat computer compulsion by keeping themselves engaged with exercises, and group activities. Many other countries have done the same thing. Kids need all the help they can get.

Over 50,000 people, young and old in America, are dying of drug-related causes every year. Minor addictions like Pot can create a predisposition to more serious addictions. Pot is known to be an entry level drug leading to the use of deadly illegal drugs. There’s no magic bullet that can make addictions go away, especially when they become Major addictions. The Opioid Epidemic alone takes many thousands of lives every year. Add to that deaths from heroin, cocaine, ecstasy, and methamphetamine. Taken all together, you have more deaths in one year from drug use than the total death toll of the entire Vietnamese War, which lasted about eight years.

Rather than dwell on these sad statistics, I’d prefer to close with a positive story from Anthony de Mello’s book, “The Song of the Bird.” I’ve paraphrased it slightly. A young boy addicted to drugs opens the story with these words, “Everyone kept after me to change, and I resented it. And yet I agreed with them in a way I wanted to be free of the constant pressure to clean up my act, but I simply couldn’t kick the habit. No matter how hard I tried I felt powerless and trapped. Then one day out of the blue, my father who had grown weary of nagging me said, ‘Son I give up, don’t change... I love you just as you are. Deal with this as best you can. I’m turning it all over to the Lord.’ I suddenly felt free and less guilty. I still wanted to be free of drugs, but now I began to realize that I was the only one who could make it happen. When I realized that my father would continue to love me whether I changed or not, something happened inside of me. And believe it or not, I went on to become drug-free.”

Everyone is unique. Some remedies may work for one person and not another, but it’s always wise to bring the Lord into the picture, and the sooner the better. Trying to help someone free themselves from an addiction is not something you should try on your own. Get help, both from neighbors and from God. It’s always good to know that you can put your trust in the Lord, and get results. Believe deeply and do not fear, for Jesus said, “Fear is useless, and what you need is trust.”