

## **INTERCEDING FOR THOSE WHO ARE ADDICTED**



**It has been said that all addiction is search for God, though addicts unfortunately search in the wrong places – whether in alcohol, drugs, gambling, food, pornography, or work, or in another person, through codependency, sex, or love. In order to recover from addiction, addicts must learn to search elsewhere for their Higher Power.**

**Many recovering addicts, however, have difficulties with prayer and traditional notions of God. For some, childhood experiences of religious communities and leaders have left them feeling alienated from organized religion. At the same time, they are learning Twelve-Step programs that in order to ground themselves and find the spiritual center from which their recovery can grow, they need to cultivate their spirituality. Others, who may have strong religious beliefs, presently often feel alienated from God. Feeling guilt about the harm they caused themselves and others during their active addiction, newly recovering addicts can all too easily shy away from contact with their Higher Power at a time when it is crucial to reopen those channels of communication. Let us pray today for all those fighting a demon in their lives.**



**Let us pause and remember that the God Who created us,  
continually walks with us and is present to us  
if we but call on Him and look for His presence.  
O God, we realize that You knew us before we were born  
when we were being fashioned in our mother's womb.  
We rejoice that You will never forget us  
and that You have carved our names on the palms of Your hands.  
In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.  
As it was, is now, and forever shall be. Amen.**

As we pray for ourselves and all those who are fighting an addiction in their lives, we call to mind a man from Ireland who can intercede for us. He knew full well the evils of addiction and the lengths he had to go through to overcome it. May he serve as an inspiration to us as we face our own demon.

### **Venerable Matt Talbot (1856 – 1925)**

From his early teens until age 28, Matt's only aim in life had been liquor. But from that point forward, his only aim was God. Matt Talbot was born May 2, 1856, the second of twelve children. In Matt's early years he knew little security or stability. Compulsory school attendance was not in force, and Matt never attended any school regularly. At the age of twelve Matt got his first job; it was in a wine-bottling store and that is when his excessive drinking began. One evening when he was 28, he went out and found a priest, went to confession and "took the Pledge" for three months. Many times he felt he would not be able to hold out for three months, but within the year he renewed the pledge for life, never touching alcohol again (41 more years). His resolve was maintained by a new life of much prayer, daily Mass, hard work and much penance. Matt's program of recovery was built around devotion to the Eucharist, love of Mary, Mother of God, spiritual reading, self-discipline and manual work. But he never forgot his struggle with his addiction. "Never look down on a man, who cannot give up the drink", he told his sister, "it is easier to get out of hell!".

Matt Talbot collapsed and died of heart failure on June 7, 1925. Penitential chains were found on his body after his death. After Matt's death his reputation for holiness became widespread.

### **A PRAYER TO MATT TALBOT**

May Matt Talbot's triumph over addiction, bring hope to our lives and strength to our hearts. May he intercede for all who struggle with an addiction. We ask this in the name of Jesus the Christ, our Great Healer. Amen.

### **PRAYER FOR THE ADDICTED**

God of mercy, we bless You in the name of Your Son, Jesus the Christ, Who ministered to all who come to Him. Give Your strength to those bound by the chains of addiction. Enfold them in Your love and restore them to the freedom of God's children. Lord, look with compassion on all those who have lost their health and freedom. Restore to them the assurance of Your unfailing mercy, and strengthen them in the work of recovery. To those who care for them, grant patient understanding and a love that perseveres. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

## **Psalm 143**

**O God, hear my prayer.**

**Listen to my plea!**

**You are just and faithful, so answer me, I beg.**

**Do not put me, Your servant, on trial.**

**My enemy has pursued me  
and completely defeated me.**

**I am in a dark prison like those long dead.**

**My spirit grows faint within me,**

**I am in deep despair.**

**Answer me now, O Lord.**

**I have lost all hope!**

**Do not hide Your face from me.**

**I trust in You.**

**To You, I lift up my soul.**

**I look to You for protection, O God.**

**May Your Spirit guide me on a safe path.**

**Save me, O God, as You have promised;**

**in Your justice rescue me from all my troubles!**

**In Your faithful love for me,**

**protect me, O Lord, because I am Your servant.**



## **2 Corinthians 12: 1–10**

**I must boast; not that it is profitable, but I will go on to visions and revelations of the Lord.**

**I know someone in Christ who was caught up to the third heaven.**

**And I know that this person was caught up into Paradise.**

**About this person I will boast, but about myself I will not boast, except about my weaknesses.**

**Although if I should wish to boast, I would not be foolish, for I would be telling the truth. But I refrain, so that no one may think more of me than what he sees in me or hears from me because of the abundance of the revelations. Therefore, that I might not become too elated, a thorn in the flesh was given to me, an angel of Satan, to beat me, to keep me from being too elated.**

**Three times I begged the Lord about this, that it might leave me, but He said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for power is made perfect in weakness.” I will rather boast most gladly of my weaknesses, in order that the power of Christ may dwell with me.**

**Therefore, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and constraints, for the sake of Christ; for when I am weak, then I am strong.**

## **Matthew 8: 14 – 17**

Jesus entered the house of Peter, and saw his mother-in-law lying in bed with a fever. He touched her hand, the fever left her, and she rose and waited on Him.

When it was evening, they brought Him many who were possessed by demons, and He drove out the spirits by a word and cured all the sick, to fulfill what had been said by Isaiah the prophet: “He took away our infirmities and bore our diseases.”

### **The 12 Steps**

- 1. We admitted we were powerless over our addiction – that our lives had become unmanageable**
- 2. Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity**
- 3. Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God, as we understood God**
- 4. Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves**
- 5. Admitted to God, to ourselves and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs**
- 6. Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character**
- 7. Humbly asked God to remove our shortcomings**
- 8. Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all**
- 9. Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others**
- 10. Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it**
- 11. Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood God, praying only for knowledge of God’s will for us and the power to carry that out**
- 12. Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to other addicts, and to practice these principles in all our affairs**

## **The Serenity Prayer**

God grant me the serenity  
to accept the things I cannot change;  
courage to change the things I can;  
and wisdom to know the difference.

Living one day at a time;  
Enjoying one moment at a time;  
Accepting hardships as the pathway to peace;  
Taking, as He did, this sinful world  
as it is, not as I would have it;  
Trusting that He will make all things right  
if I surrender to His Will;  
That I may be reasonably happy in this life  
and supremely happy with Him  
Forever in the next. Amen.

- Reinhold Niebuhr

## **Prayer to the Holy Spirit**

Breathe in me, O Holy Spirit, that my thoughts may all be holy.  
Act in me, O Holy Spirit, that my work, too, may be holy.  
Draw my heart, O Holy Spirit, that I love but what is holy.  
Strengthen me, O Holy Spirit, to defend all that is holy.  
Guard me, then, O Holy Spirit, that I always may be holy.  
Amen.

- St. Augustine

### **5 Steps to Better Mental Health**

- 1. Eat well.**
- 2. Exercise.**
- 3. Get enough sleep.**
- 4. Spend time with people who love you.**
- 5. Do something that makes you laugh.**

**We beseech You, Master, to be our helper and protector.  
Save the afflicted among us; have mercy on the lowly;  
raise up the fallen; appear to the needy; heal the ungodly;  
restore the wanderers of your people;  
feed the hungry; ransom the prisoners;  
raise up the sick; comfort the faint-hearted.**

**- Clement of Rome (1st Century**



**Venerable Matt Talbot, intercede with the Lord for us  
and help us in our struggles with our addictions.**

**Saint John Baptist de La Salle  
and all you holy Brothers who have gone before us,  
Inspire us to be filled with faith and hope.**

**Live Jesus in our hearts. Forever!**