

ST. AUGUSTINE INSTITUTE

For National Priestly Ongoing Formation

SH 43/11, Course 40



BURNOUT AND SELF-CARE

Simon P.M. Kyambadde

14th July 2008

CONTENTS

BURN OUT	3
<i>Prayer</i>	3
<i>Burnout Self-Test</i>	3
<i>Biblical Example</i>	7
<i>Definitions</i>	8
<i>How can you tell if you are burning out?</i>	12
<i>Burnout related to certain character traits</i>	12
<i>Some Causes of Burnout among Priests</i>	14
<i>Bunout and the Midlife Crisis</i>	16
<i>Discussion:</i>	20
SELF CARE AGAINST BURNOUT	20
<i>Prevention of Caregiver Burnout</i>	20
<i>Resolutions</i>	25
<i>Lecture Plan</i>	26

BURN OUT

PRAYER

Lord, teach me how to rest!

Teach me to leave problems unsettled, and not to try to solve them all
before going to bed.

Teach me how to end a day... otherwise I will not be able to die...
because there will be always work to be done even after me.

Help me to understand that I am not YOU. Amen.

BURNOUT SELF-TEST

Test One

This tool can help you check yourself for burnout. It helps you look at the way you feel about your ministry and your experiences at work, so that you can get a feel for whether you might be at risk of burnout.

Tick what you consider to be the most applicable answer to your situation. (You might consider working on a separate sheet since you or someone else might want to use the booklet at some future stage.) Select only one answer in each row. Score 1 for every tick in the “Not At All” column, 2 for every tick in the “Rarely” column, and so on up to 5 for every tick in the “Very Often” column. Add up your total and check your result using the scoring table underneath.

#	Question	Not at all	Rarely	Some times	Often	Very Often
1	Do you feel run down and drained of physical or emotional energy?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2	Do you find that you are prone to negative thinking about your work?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3	Do you find that you are harder and less sympathetic with people than perhaps they deserve?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4	Do you find yourself getting easily irritated by small problems, or by your	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

	co-workers and community members?					
5	Do you feel misunderstood or unappreciated by your community?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
6	Do you feel that you have no one to talk to?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
7	Do you feel that you are achieving less than you should?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
8	Do you feel under an unpleasant level of pressure to succeed?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
9	Do you feel that you are not getting what you want out of your profession?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
10	Do you feel that you are in the wrong vocation or the wrong profession?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
11	Are you becoming frustrated with parts of the task assigned to you?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
12	Do you feel that congregation rules or superiors frustrate your ability to do a good job?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
13	Do you feel that there is more work to do than you practically have the ability to do?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
14	Do you feel that you do not have time to do many of the things that are important to doing a good quality job?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
15	Do you find that you do not have time to plan as much as you would like to?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Score Interpretation

Score	Comment
15 – 18	Little sign of burnout here
19 – 32	Little sign of burnout here, unless some factors are particularly severe
33 – 49	Be careful - you may be at risk of burnout, particularly if several scores are high
50 – 59	You may be at severe risk of burnout - do something about this urgently
60 - 75	You may be at very severe risk of burnout - do something about this urgently

Note:

This tool uses an informal approach to assessing burnout. While it is intuitively useful, it has not been validated through controlled scientific tests and must therefore not be used as a diagnostic technique. Please, therefore, interpret the results with common sense. Also, make allowances for any recent events that may have a disproportionate influence on your mood at the time you take the test!

If you prefer rigorously validated tests, then the Maslach Burnout Inventory may be useful. This was developed by Christina Maslach, one of the leading researchers in the field of burnout. Copies can be purchased at the following site:

<http://www.cpp-db.com/detail/detailprod.asp?pc=35>.

Test Two

The statements below are indicators of burnout. Almost everyone experiences some of these feelings at some time in his or her career. Check those that are most appropriate for you. If you check more than five, you may want to look more closely at yourself and consider developing some techniques for reducing stress and preventing burnout.

- I feel hopeless and trapped in my vocation.
- I am constantly tired.
- I am bored with my duties and co-workers.
- I am easily irritated and have little patience with co-workers and parishioner or community members.
- I am cynical about my present assignment and my profession.
- I want change in my daily routine, yet I feel threatened by change.
- I feel that I lack control over my circumstances.
- I have difficulty concentrating on specific tasks.
- I withdraw, because working at problem-solving seems futile.
- I use alcohol and drugs too often.
- I occupy myself with trivial activities to escape more important responsibilities.
- I used to care about others, but now I'm too preoccupied with my own health, sanity and career.
- I am restless and have difficulty relaxing or sleeping.
- I doubt that I really make a difference to my parishioners, co-workers, friends or family.
- I have lost my vocational and personal confidence.

- I hate to get out of bed and dread going to work.
- I put off making decisions because they seem overwhelming.
- I don't want to hear about anyone else's problems.
- I feel I have nothing more to give.
- I am just going through the motions --- waiting for a shift change, a new job or retirement.
- I've lost my sense of purpose or enthusiasm about my job.
- I often use phrases such as, "I don't care anymore", or "Why bother?"
- I am highly critical of others.
- My self-esteem is low.
- I use all kinds of excuses just to get away from work.
- My social involvement has decreased both on and off the job.
- I frequently complain and despair over problems.

BIBLICAL EXAMPLE



Elijah is considered one of the greatest prophets of the Old Testament. He dared to challenge a king for his injustices, knowing very well what the king could do to him. Just think of the courage of Archbishop Ncube in our time against president Mugabe. Elijah had absolute faith in God, such that he could dare to eat the only remaining meal of a

poor widow, sure that God would not leave her starve to death as she feared. He challenged the 400 prophets of Baal with courage, contemptuously deriding them certain that he would not be let down by own God, when his turn to show God’s power came. Yet a time came when this great prophet showed signs of burnout.

We read in the first book of Kings that Elijah “*was afraid and fled for his life. He came to Beersheba, a town of Judah, where he left his servant. He himself went on into the wilderness, a day’s journey, and sitting under a furze bush wished he were dead. ‘Yahweh,’ he said ‘I have had enough. Take my life; I am no better than my ancestors...’*” (1 Kings 10:3ff).

DEFINITIONS

Burnout

Burnout is a state of emotional and physical exhaustion caused by excessive and prolonged It can occur when you feel overwhelmed and unable constant demands. As the continues, you begin to the interest or motivation you to take on a certain



stress.

to meet
stress
lose
that led
role in

the first place. Burnout reduces your productivity and saps your energy, leaving you feeling increasingly hopeless, powerless, cynical, resentful, confused, and having a feeling of being drained, of having nothing more to give. The unhappiness burnout causes can eventually threaten your ministry, your relationships, and your health.



Burnout is often construed as the result of a period of

expending too much effort at work while having too little recovery, but it is sometimes argued that workers with particular personality traits are more prone to experiencing burnout.

The word is also used as pejorative slang, referring to an individual who has burned themselves out on a vice, such as drugs, sex or alcohol.

Stress

Stress is a physiological, psychological, and emotional response by an individual when they perceive a lack of equilibrium between the demands placed upon them and their ability to cope.

Stress is not something in the outside world that happens to us, but our own set of feelings and reactions towards what happens in the external world. Too much or too little pressure can lead to stress.

Psychological symptoms of stress include: anxiety, anger, depression, fear or nervousness, guilt, tension, helplessness, low self-esteem, swinging moods, withdrawal into daydreaming and suicidal feelings.



Physiological symptoms include: headaches,

palpitation of the heart, tightness in the chest, indigestion, tiredness, aches and pains, stomach high blood pressure, heart attacks, rapid weight loss, backache or neck-ache and insomnia or lack of sleep.



pain and vague ulcers, strokes, gain or

Behavioral symptoms include: accident proneness, poor work output, aggressive or passive behaviour, irritability or sulking, increased absence from work, compulsive behaviour, increased

intake of alcohol, withdrawal from supportive relationships, over-eating or loss of appetite, and poor time management.

Difference between stress and burnout

Burnout may be the result of unrelenting stress, but it isn't the same as too much stress. Stress, by and large, involves too much: too many pressures that demand too much of you physically and psychologically. Stressed people can still imagine, though, that if they can just get everything under control, they'll feel better. Burnout, on the other hand, is about not enough. Being burned out means feeling empty, devoid of motivation, and beyond caring. People experiencing burnout often don't see any hope of positive change in their situations. If excessive stress is like drowning in responsibilities, burnout is being all dried up.

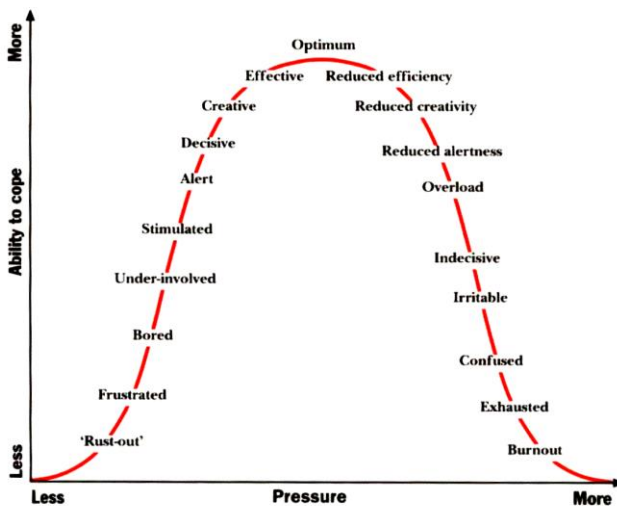
Dr. Arch Hart, in an article on "Stress and Burnout" in *the Clergy*, lists some specific differences between stress and burnout:

Stress	Burnout
Characterized by overengagement	Characterized by disengagement
Emotions are overreactive	Emotions are blunted
Produces urgency and hyperactivity	Produces helplessness and hopelessness
Exhausts physical energy	Exhausts motivation and drive, ideals and hope
Leads to anxiety disorders	Leads to paranoia, detachment, and depression
Causes disintegration	Causes demoralization
Primary damage is physical	Primary damage is emotional
Stress may kill you prematurely, and you won't have enough time to finish what you started.	Burnout may never kill you, but your life may not seem worth living.

One other difference between stress and burnout: While you're usually aware of being under a lot of stress, you don't always notice burnout when it happens. The symptoms of burnout — the hopelessness, the cynicism, the detachment from others — can take months to surface. If someone close to you points out changes in your attitude or behavior that are typical of burnout, listen to that person.

The graph below is a further illustration of the relationship between stress and burnout. It further illustrates the relationship between pressure and the ability to cope. Each person needs the right

The relationship of pressure to the ability to cope



(adapted from Clarke and Palmer 1994)

amount of pressure to be at their peak of performance. This amount is different from each person

HOW CAN YOU TELL IF YOU ARE BURNING OUT?

Because burnout doesn't happen overnight — and it's difficult to fight once you're in the middle of it — it's important to recognize the early signs of burnout and head it off. Burnout usually has its roots in stress, so the earlier you recognize the symptoms of stress and address them, the better chance you have of avoiding burnout. Identifying the causes of your stress, recognizing your limited control of any given situation, and taking care of yourself emotionally and physically can help you to avoid burnout.

The signs of burnout tend to be more mental than physical. (Refer to the test exercises above). They can include feelings of:

- Frustration and powerlessness
- Hopelessness
- Being drained of emotional energy
- Detachment, withdrawal, isolation
- Being trapped
- Having failed at what you're doing
- Irritability: always snapping at people or making snide remarks about them.
- Sadness
- Depression: you might want to sleep all the time or always be “too tired” to socialize.
- Cynicism (people act out of selfishness and nothing can be done about it)
- Escapist behaviors such as sex, drinking, drugs, partying, or shopping binges to try to escape from your negative feelings.

BURNOUT RELATED TO CERTAIN CHARACTER TRAITS

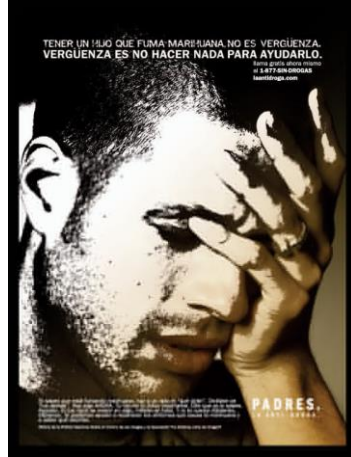
Personality and attitudinal factors may increase the propensity to burnout. Personalities that may be more prone to burnout include:

- People who are under-assertive; who are not able to own feelings of anger or who do not know how to express it appropriately
- People who have an acute sense of remorse and guilt
- People driven by the



pressure to succeed

- Authoritarian personalities that come across as insensitive to other people's feelings
- Too-sensitive persons who can feel with others' hurts but who are vulnerable to criticism



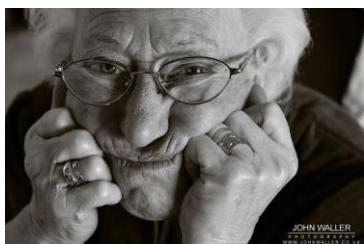
Among priests, however, essence of the problem is the clash between expectations and reality. Clergy are often put on a pedestal - by others, and by themselves. Many of these expectations just can't be met. We try to please, but may either become too goal-oriented for our people, or else too accommodating to their spiritual "slackness".

SOME CAUSES OF BURNOUT AMONG PRIESTS

- “Messiah trap:” A person falling into the messiah trap tends to believe two lies. The first lie is “If I don't do it, it won't get done” which is an excessive sense of responsibility. We feel that we are really important and that God needs us. This happens especially when people are trained to be very responsible. A lot of people who end up in ministry—including youth ministry—are good people whose identity is based on being a good and helpful person. The second lie is “Everyone else's needs take priority over mine,” a combination of grandiosity and low self-esteem.
- Setting unrealistic goals for yourself or having them imposed upon you.
- Being expected to be too many things to too many people.
- Cumulative stress due to living a lifestyle that contradicts priestly values
- Long-lasting unresolved conflicts e.g. between confreres, with the bishop or with some of the parishioners.
- Inability to deal with inevitable loneliness.
- Working under rules that seem unreasonably coercive or punitive.
- Boredom from doing work that never changes or doesn't challenge you. Doing the same things over and over again, mass, homily, burial, anointing, confessions, etc.
- A feeling that one chose the wrong vocation, along with the feeling that circumstances force you to put up with it.



- Thwarted ambitions, e.g. for further studies.
- Loss of faith and abandon of personal prayer life.



- When people are ungrateful in spite of so much sacrifice
- When the demands of the people are much more than your resources
- Non-appreciation by superiors, whether imagined or real
- Constant failure in the professed ideals depletes inner energy, making one feel hypocritical
- Not seeing the fruits of your labor among the people you work; seeing no change in them in spite of trying so hard to improve their condition
- A priestly ministry lived out of ego-centric motives
- Seeing your ministry in terms of what you do alone, and not what you are. Acting all the time out of your persona, not having enough opportunities to be yourself. People see Fr. so and so, the chaplain, the parish priest, the uncle, the man of God, not yourself.
- Meeting so many people who come to you for their self-satisfaction.
- Poor working conditions (mainly for curates): e.g. irregular meals, poor remuneration, lack of transparency regarding finance, lack of dialogue and meetings, lack of clear pastoral plans, pastoral surprises, frequent transfers, support staff related or attached to the parish priest, lack of private time
- (Mainly for parish priest) little involvement of the curate in pastoral program, retention of funds that belong to the

parish, insubordination, socialization away from the parish, non-appreciation of the financial constraints of the parish.

- Failure: a person who has worked for so many years and who comes to the conclusion that he is a failure finds it difficult to be motivated out of this depressing feeling. Ask yourself the questions: 1) are we failing because of some fault of our own? 2) Are we failing because we are in a situation in which we cannot possibly win? Are we really failing or do we only think we are failing because we are measuring success by the wrong standards?

BUNOUT AND THE MIDLIFE CRISIS

Definition

The Midlife Crisis is the crisis of limits, in the sense that we become more acutely aware of our human limits than before. Jung described it as the “Second Half of Life.” For men the Midlife crisis is usually between 40 and 45 while for women it is approximately between 35 and 40, but this varies from person to person.

Quite often we have a dream in our early days. We give ourselves into something. For instance one may want to study in order to become somebody. Often it is the case that when eventually we have achieved what we wanted, we discover that we have neglected our own selves. What we strived so much to attain may appear not so important after all. We may then ask ourselves whether this is all there is to life.

Symptoms

Physiological symptoms of the Crisis of Limits include:

- The first grey hairs may cause anxiety.
- Wrinkles
- A need for glasses
- Weight in the area of the waistline

- Increased fatigue precisely when our duties seem to have increased

Psychological symptoms include

- A feeling of having wasted one's earlier life
- A realization that I am aging
- A realization that death is not far
- There is a sense of urgency
- What seems to have worked no longer seems to work
- Depression, restlessness, frustration, anxiety
- One may feel trying to re-create the excitement of earlier life, while at the same time experiencing meaninglessness
- One realizes that time flies although nothing really happens.
- Birthdays begin to cause a depression.
- Greater need of moderation in food
- Declining tenderness, a reduced sensitivity.
- What used to give joy becomes a source of burden
- Loss the joy of celebration
- A woman in this period may have a peak of sexual desire while at the same time she is aware of her gradual loss of charm
- She feels threatened by younger nubile women.
- A mother may become detached from her children
- For parents the midlife crisis may also consist in seeing their children in whom they had invested so much hope fail.

These symptoms may not be considered very important in isolation, but the cumulative effect can weigh on us

Meaning

It is important to realize that the midlife crisis is but a stage in the long process of growth. It follows other crises.

Midlife is the prelude to old age. That may sound frightening; unless we have the courage and the faith to look at the positive side of old age. The usual tendency is to focus solely at the negative side of old age, as the time when one is frustrated with failing faculties, when the beauty of youth is gone, when old acquaintances have died, when health is poor, every day brings pain, so many medicines to take, when the fear increases that a time will come when a person becomes totally dependent, and perhaps even a nuisance. All this can be true, but there is also a positive side. We need to see old age like the moment of transition it is, in the wise plan of God. The sun sets slowly, not abruptly. The airplane must reduce speed before landing in order to avoid a crash. As a person approaches the passage to the next life there is need to get detached from this earthly life. Many of the things that were of utmost value here below must slowly lose their importance. Old age is meant to loosen these ties – to wealth, to health, to beauty, to ambition, etc. – in order to prepare the person for the radical break with the earthly. But it requires wisdom and faith to see it that way. And midlife is the transition to old age.

We cannot fulfill ourselves in our purely earthly condition. We can fulfill ourselves only in our original integrity with the whole of being. Midlife crisis points beyond our earthly condition. We are made in the image and likeness of God, therefore we must work on ourselves to get back to that, where we can experience ourselves as loveable. That unites us with God and with the whole of creation. In this crisis of limits we discover the radical limitedness of being human. We learn the hard way.

Coping with the Midlife Crisis

One of the ways of coping with this crisis is to move more from doing to being; for it is precisely when one has acquired everything they longed for that they feel unfulfilled. In this period spiritual life and cosmic participation are part of our goal.

We come to realize that even if we would gain the whole world life would remain meaningless. We have to come to a stage in our

inner realization that ultimately we have to surrender to God. Once we do that this becomes a release. We are challenged to achieve the fullness of our authenticity, to be perceptive of reality in its true color: the world, others, myself, God. This inevitably requires us to learn to love, to listen to the wider picture. We learn that the “negative” symptoms of midlife are in fact neither negative nor pathological. They call us to the realization that there is more to life than what we know of it. They teach us that we have mistaken merely human values for ultimate values. Feelings of frustration and of failure are fundamentally not wrong. They are healthy indications that a new phase of growth is awakening in us. You may be feeling darkness; welcome it, stay with it and wait. In due course the light of growth will come. The darkness liberates us from merely earthly values and frees us for our most authentic values. Unfortunately we can spend the rest of our life struggling through the midlife crisis if we don’t open ourselves fully to God. But for those willing to take on the risk of growth, the successful outcome of the midlife crisis is the birth of a mature personality.

DISCUSSION:

- In the light of your past and present activity, share from your own life the experience of stress and burnout: whether it is a past event, a present reality or a possibility
- Share your experiences, if any, of the midlife crisis. What helps you to cope?

SELF CARE AGAINST BURNOUT

PREVENTION OF CAREGIVER BURNOUT

The following are suggestions made by different studies under different circumstances that may not exactly match our peculiar situations. Afterwards we are going to study in groups what we consider to be the effective ways of preventing burnout in our ministry.

Educate yourself: Continually strive to learn more about your work and about the people you serve. The more you know, the more effective you'll be, and the better you'll feel about your efforts.

Know your limits Be realistic about how much of your time and yourself you can give, set limits, and communicate those limits to co-workers, family members, and other people involved.

Accept your feelings You might be angry toward the care receiver because your care isn't appreciated; because you feel trapped in the position of caregiver; because someone you care about is ill. And then you might feel guilty for being



angry. As long as you don't compromise the well-being of the care receiver, allow yourself to feel what you feel.

Confide in others Talk to people about what you feel; don't keep your emotions bottled up. This is where the support group comes in, but trusted friends and family members can help too.

Cultivate healthy relationships with immediate co-workers: Your curate, your parish priest, your colleague, etc. and the people you must interact with every day, whether you like it or not. It is important to have healthy relationship with these above all. You cannot be responsible for all the conflicts that may arise, but at least have the firm desire to make peace. Once you have an appreciation of the importance of unity you will also find the means to work for it.

Allow others to take their share of work (Read the story of Moses in Exodus 18:17-24; Acts 6:1-7)

Moses sat to judge the people, and the people stood about Moses from morning till evening. When Moses' father-in-law saw all that he was doing for the people, he said, "What is this that you are doing for the people? Why do you sit alone, and all the people stand about you from morning till evening?" And Moses said to his father-in-law, "Because the people come to me to inquire of God; when they have a dispute, they come to me and I decide between a man and his neighbor, and I make them know the statutes of God and his decisions." Moses' father-in-law said to him, "What you are doing is not good. You and the people with you will wear yourselves out, for the thing is too heavy for you; you are not able to perform it alone. Listen now to my voice; I will give you counsel, and God be with you! You shall represent the people before God, and bring their cases to God; and you shall teach them the statutes and the decisions, and make them know the way in which they must walk and what they must do. Moreover choose able men from all the people, such as fear God, men who are trustworthy and who hate a bribe; and place such men over the people as rulers of thousands, of hundreds, of fifties, and of tens. And let them judge the people at all times; every great matter they shall bring to you, but any

small matter they shall decide themselves; so it will be easier for you, and they will bear the burden with you. If you do this, and God so commands you, then you will be able to endure, and all this people also will go to their place in peace." So Moses gave heed to the voice of his father-in-law and did all that he had said. Moses chose able men out of all Israel, and made them heads over the people, rulers of thousands, of hundreds, of fifties, and of tens. And they judged the people at all times; hard cases they brought to Moses, but any small matter they decided themselves.

Have enough rest (annual leave, monthly or weekly day of, enough sleep, etc) Canon 533 par 2 about the annual holiday for a parish priest. Canon 550 paragraph 3 about the holiday of the assistant priest. How do you utilize your holiday in order for it to be replenishing of lost strength? How do you keep the Sabbath holy?

Develop hobbies. Cultivate activities that give you joy, satisfaction, a sense of achievement, etc. painting, swimming, music, reading, walks, flowers, gardening, different sports and games, etc.

Evaluate your standards. What do you consider to be success and failure? Do these correspond to objective truth?

Learn to enjoy the little pleasures of life. Good weather, the birds, the sunset, music, etc.

Count your blessings, particularly when you suffer defeat. Fight the destructive critic.



Pray! Prayer is a source of spiritual energy. The most important thing is not *how* we pray, but *that* we pray.

Clarify your personal values and live according to them. Behaviour that is cross-purpose with your ideals cannot help but increase your stress level.

Take care of your health. Be informed what is healthy to eat and what is not. If you have forbidden foods take heed of medical advice. Take your medicines regularly. Go for medical checkup now and then, particularly if you have some unclear complaint. Have some regular physical exercise. Check your drinking habits.

Learn to balance. Try to take life in moderation. You only have so much energy available. Ascertain what is wanted and needed in your life, then begin to balance work with love, pleasure, and relaxation.



Stop denying. Listen to the wisdom of your body. Begin to freely admit the stresses and pressures which have manifested themselves physically, mentally, or emotionally. Overcome the paranoiac belief of working until physical pain forces you into unconsciousness.

Learn how to say “no” when this is necessary. You'll help diminish intensity by speaking up for yourself. This means refusing additional requests or demands on your time or emotions.

Do not be surprised when troubles come your way. Recall that the cross has an essential place in the life of the believer. “When you expect life to be difficult, it is much less difficult.” M. Scott Peck.



Diminish worry and anxiety. It is true, that we have no absolute control over our feelings. You cannot simply command worry to go away if the cause of worry is real. Nevertheless we can diminish unnecessary worry. Do not ignore

your positive side. Take one day at a time. Celebrate little successes. Work out on paper the pros and cons of the worrying situation.

Take regular time off. You aren't called to work harder than your Creator. Develop a way of being 'through for the day' (at least most days). Take your full four weeks' annual leave in one stretch (and make alternative arrangements for weddings, etc.). On your day/s off, do something very different from what you do the other days.

Get proper exercise and sleep. Exercise fairly vigorously 3-4 times a week. Walk, swim, play tennis; perspire and regularly breathe deeply. Allow adequate time for sleep.

Have fun! To belong to the kingdom you have to be like little children. They aren't bothered about piles of correspondence or running the world. They get absorbed in things, even forgetting to run their own lives! So develop a few 'interesting interests' Remember, with humorist Kin Hubbard: 'Do not take life too seriously; you will never get out of it alive!'

Join a small support/prayer group. Ministry peers will better understand your needs. Next year we intend to start a Growth-group session here. Meet with friends in the ministry and deliberately put time aside to talk about things that affect you deeply.

RESOLUTIONS

What are you going to do?



LECTURE PLAN

Explain the change of facilitator

Information came after timetable was fixed

Still nothing is lost

This is a topic about self-examination

The lecture is meant to provoke thought

The discussions applies the study to experience

Most important is what you do afterwards

Prayer

To be written on a chart on the BB

To be recited together

Lord, teach me how to rest!

Teach me to leave problems unsettled, and not to try to solve them all before going to bed.

Teach me how to end a day... otherwise I will not be able to die...

because there will be always work to be done even after me.

Help me to understand that I am not YOU. Amen.

This is both a prayer as well as food for thought

Outline

Self Test

Definitions of Burnout and Stress

Symptoms

Causes

Relation to Midlife Crisis

Discussion: Examination of personal experience

Prevention and Treatment

Resolution

Self Test:

Give first test without interpretation text

Give Second text

At the end of the two explain how to interpret results

Invite sharing

How was the exercise for you?

What do you discover about yourself (briefly)

Feel free to retain results to yourself

Definition

Burnout (write on the blackboard)

Burnout is a state of emotional and physical exhaustion caused by excessive and prolonged stress.

Burnout reduces your productivity and saps your energy, leaving you feeling increasingly hopeless, powerless, cynical, resentful, confused, and having a feeling of being drained, of having nothing more to give.

The unhappiness burnout causes can eventually threaten your ministry, your relationships, and your health.

Does this sound familiar to anyone?

Pejoratives sense

Stress (write out the definition)

Stress is a physiological, psychological, and behavioral response by an individual when they perceive a lack of equilibrium between the demands placed upon them and their ability to cope.

Psychological symptoms

Anxiety

Anger

Depression

Fear or nervousness

Guilt

Tension

Helplessness

Swinging moods

Withdrawal into daydreaming

Suicidal feelings

Physiological symptoms

Headaches

Palpitation of the heart

Pain and tightness in the chest

Indigestion

Tiredness

Vague aches and pains

Stomach ulcers

High blood pressure

Strokes

Heart attacks

Rapid weight gain or loss

Backache or neck-ache

Insomnia or lack of sleep

Behavioral symptoms

- Accident proneness
- Poor work output
- Aggressive or passive behaviour
- Irritability or sulking
- Increased absence from work
- Compulsive behaviour
- Increased intake of alcohol
- Withdrawal from supportive relationships
- Over-eating or loss of appetite
- Poor time management

(Write symptoms on the blackboard)

Invite other contributions

Difference between burnout and stress

Draw chart on blackboard (from page 10)

Draw Graph showing pressure vs ability to cope (p. 11)

Symptoms

The question is how can I know I suffer burnout?

Pay attention to the symptoms of stress above

Other signs:

- Frustration and powerlessness
- Hopelessness
- Being drained of emotional energy
- Detachment, withdrawal, isolation
- Acute sense of failure
- Sadness
- Depression: desire for sleep at wrong hours
- Cynicism: conviction that people are selfish, etc
- Escapism: sex, drinking, parting, etc

Causes

Certain character traits are more prone

- People who are under-assertive
- People who have acute sense of shame
- People driven by pressure to succeed
- People who are authoritarian
- Very sensitive persons vulnerable to criticism
- Perfectionists (setting unrealistic goals)

Some causes among priests

- Messiah trap
 - If I don't do it no one will
 - (Excessive sense of responsibility)
 - Other people's needs take priority

(Generosity plus low self-esteem)

People expecting too much from the priest
Long-lasting unresolved conflict with confreres
Stress due to living in contradiction to priestly vows
Inability to deal with inevitable priestly loneliness
Perceiving liturgy and pastoral work as boring
 Mass, homilies,
 Confessions, anointing, burials,
 Pastoral visitations
Doubt about one's priestly vocation
Thwarted ambitions
Loss of prayer and decline of prayer life
Ingratitude of dependants
Demands that supercede resources
Constant failure in the ministry
Not seeing fruits of one's labor: people not changing
Egocentric expectations from the priestly ministry
Lack of opportunities to be yourself as a person
Poor working conditions (curate)
 Irregular meals, lack of dialogue and meetings
 Lack of transparence of co-worker
 Pastoral surprises, frequent transfers,
Poor working conditions (parish priest)
 Lack of cooperation of curate, insubordination,
 Non-appreciation of financial constraints
Failure (sometimes imagined)
 Are you failing due to your own fault?
 Are we in a situation in which we can't win?
 Are we really failing?

Burnout and the Midlife Crisis

Meaning of Midlife Crisis
 We become more acutely aware of limitations
usually in the second half of life
 40-45 among men
 35-40 among women
 But this varies
 We look back to unachieved dreams
 Or achievements fail to satisfy
Symptoms of the midlife crisis
 The first grey hairs may cause anxiety.

Wrinkles
Loss of teeth
A need for glasses
Weight in the area of the waistline
Increased fatigue with more duties

Psychological symptoms include

A feeling of having wasted one's earlier life
A realization that I am aging
A realization that death is not far
There is a sense of urgency
What seems to have worked no longer seems to
Depression, restlessness, frustration, anxiety
Frustrated attempt to find meaning
Time flies although nothing really happens
Birthdays begin to cause a depression.
Greater need of moderation in food
Declining tenderness, a reduced sensitivity.
What used to give joy becomes burdensome
Loss the joy of celebration
Pick sexual desire plus loss of charm (women)
Feeling threatened by younger people
Failure of young people you invested in

Meaning of the Midlife crisis

It is a stage of growth like many others
It is a prelude to old age which has its positive side
Approaching the passage to the next life
Gradual detachment to the transitory
 Physic, beauty, wealth
 Ambition, etc
Invitation to embrace more lasting values
Stop doing and start being
Reminder that we cant do everything
Invitation to deepen spiritual life
Realize that there is more to life

Discussion

- In the light of your past and present activity, share from your own life the experience of stress and burnout: whether it is a past event, a present reality or a possibility
- Share your experiences, if any, of the midlife crisis. What helps you to cope?

Self Care

Educate yourself

- Learn more about your trade
- Efficiency yields greater output
- This in turn yields self-confidence

Know your limits

- Be realistic about how much you can do
- Take into account available time
- Have the courage to say no to what you cant do

Confide in others

- Share about how you feel
- Have a support group
- Value friends and family members

Cultivate healthy relations with immediate co-workers

- Curate, parish priest, etc
- Have the will to make peace
- Share meals, prayer,

Allow others to take their share of work

- Someone to read Exodus 18:17-24
- Or Acts 6:1-7

Have enough rest

- Take your annual leave (canon 535 par 2)
- Plan your holiday to retrieve energy
- Take your day off in the week or month

Develop hobbies

- Cultivate activities that give you joy
- (We share about what our hobbies are)*

Evaluate your standards

- What do you consider success or failure?
- Do these correspond to objective truth?

Learn to enjoy the little pleasures of life

The joy of children

Nature

(Invite other contributions)

Pray regularly

See prayer as a source of energy

In spite of difficulties keep on praying

Strive to improve prayer life

Clarify your personal values

Examine behavior that is at cross purpose

Know that this harms you in the first place

Take steps to change

Take care of your health

Follow medical advice

Have a medical examination

Have regular physical exercise

Check drinking habits

Balance work with love, relaxation, rest

Listen to the body. Stop denying

When you are tired

When you are in a bad mood

When you have pain

Do not be surprised when troubles come your way

Recall that the cross is part of Christian life

Do not expect life to be easy, it is not

Observe those who are much worse off

Avoid too much self pity

Diminish worry and anxiety

It is true that these are inevitable

Do not ignore your positive qualities

Look critically at the cause of worry

Set your mind on what can be done

Take one day at a time

Celebrate little successes

Work out the pros and cons on paper

Sleep long enough

Have fun!

What gives you fun?

Develop interesting interests

Resolutions: What are you going to do?