

MATTERS PERTAINING TO PRIESTS/SEMINARIANS

X. Policy on Chemical Dependency

- A. In the spirit of Christ, our Brother, with the love of God our Father, and the guidance of the Holy Spirit who dwells within us, the Diocese of Crookston presents the following policy for dealing with the illness of chemical dependence. This illness can afflict the human person regardless of class, nationality, intelligence, education or profession. It is a progressive and terminal illness with no respect to person. Christian charity demands that we give this our serious consideration and assume our necessary responsibility to provide appropriate health care for all clergy, religious and diocesan, so afflicted.
- B. Chemical dependency is a generic term embracing the abuse of any addictive drug (alcohol, prescribed medications, street drugs, etc.) It includes any mood altering chemical, legal or illegal. Through recognizable and terminal, it is treatable. It affects the total person: spiritually, mentally, emotionally and physically. All areas of the dependent person's living are affected, and one so afflicted is in need of professional help.
- C. Seminars to create an awareness and an understanding of this illness should be provided periodically for all clergy. Professional people in this field should conduct these seminars.
- D. Fellow clergy, one or more, aware of the existence of this illness or of its likelihood in another, have an obligation arising from Christian love and justice to help the dependent person obtain professional help. At all costs, everyone must avoid becoming the dependent person's "enabler."
- E. Confidentiality in approaching, handling and treating this matter is vitally necessary; still, when all else seems fruitless, the matter is to be referred to the Bishop.
- F. Confrontation and intervention must be accomplished in a spirit of fraternal love and support.
- G. Existing agencies are to be used to evaluate the existence and the seriousness of chemical dependence and to recommend--if needed--the best proper treatment.
- H. If, after evaluation, it is determined that the cleric is in need of professional help, the agency's recommendations for treatment of the illness is to be followed.
- I. The agency should arrange and ensure follow-up therapy for the cleric after treatment.