



Parish Heartbeats: Stories of Faith In Action

“My Biggest Role Model is Jesus.”

You don't have to know Parishioner Rob Bollendorf very long before you get a picture of a person who has dedicated his life to helping others. His life of service includes one year in DeSales Preparatory in Milwaukee to contemplate becoming a Priest, aiding others in the corrections system, teaching at the College of Dupage (COD) for 40 years and writing six books about addictive behaviors and how to deal with them. He is also an active advocate for bicycling, Native Americans and Environmental causes.

The driving force behind virtually all of his professional and personal choices is to help people. “My biggest role model is Jesus”, says Rob. His temperament in large measure was formed in the Catholic Church. Although retired from COD, you can still read glowing recommendations about Dr. Bollendorf online in the student comments. He is a model for others as he creates a life of service and truly lives out our current Parish Mission of Open Hearts and Open Arms.

Rob was a practicing clinical psychologist and a counselor education instructor (has his doctorate) for most of his professional life in addition to teaching Human Services at COD. Each of his choices about service came from personal interactions with the issues.

When he was working in Corrections, he realized that rehabilitation was only warehousing people. He moved on to Human Services to help educate others in better ways to deal with prisoners. When his brother-in-law showed evidence of alcoholism, he began studying addiction. Inspired by his sister's ability to cope with her husband's condition, and his brother-in-law death from the effects of heavy drinking, Rob was moved to write his first book.

Over the years, he has written or co-written six books dealing with addictive behaviors. Each is a parable to help others learn about the disease. “I found myself reading and re-

reading textbooks and I had a hard time retaining information. I thought if I wrote a novel, it would engage people”, says Rob. His students at COD and other students at Aurora University where his books are utilized in the classroom seem to agree.

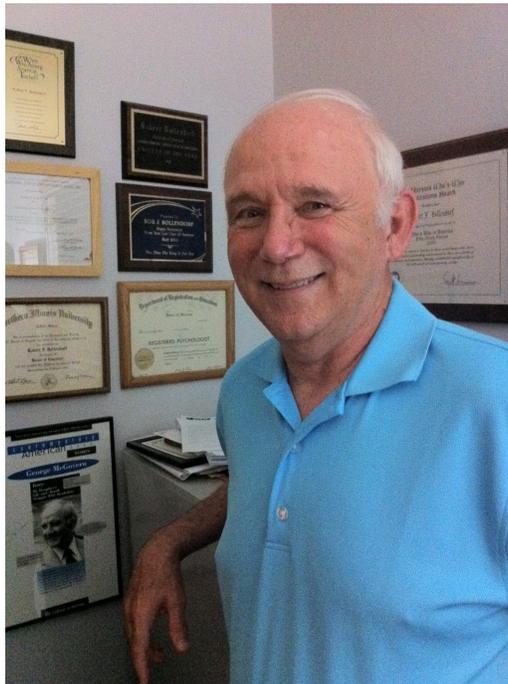
The books help people identify addictive people (there are different types and a range of compulsion); decide on a course of action (typically intervention) and how to go about effecting change. “You can only do so much and there are no guarantees” with this issue. “People getting motivated to seek help is the key” and when family, friends and professionals are involved, it helps a person realize they are in need of assistance according to the Rob.

The essence of treatment is to replace activities that are harmful with activities that are healthy and lead to more fulfillment for a person with an addiction. People need to avoid HALT, an acronym Rob uses for not being Hungry, Angry, Lonely or Tired. These are the times when a person who is addicted is most vulnerable.

If you can benefit from knowing more about Dr. Bollendorf's work, he is willing to refer you to a program that will help you get started. He no longer practices himself, but he continues to lecture at

different programs around the area and is in contact with practitioners who can help. You may reach him at bollendorf@sbcglobal.net for a reference. You can also read his novels, which are available at Amazon. The titles are: *Sober Spring*, *Flight of the Loon*, *Autumn Snow*, *Witch of Winter*, *Summer Heat* and *The Challenger*.

- written by Phil Samuels



Parish Heartbeats is an occasional bulletin column that celebrates the ways St. Margaret Mary parishioners make a difference in the lives of others.