

Aldrick Monteiro Is There Anyone Out There (Part 2) 24 April 1982  
Schizophrenia! What does the word conjure up? A split personality, insanity, mental asylums, E.C.T. treatment, or what? Does it ever mean that one who suffers from this Godforsaken illness can ever hope to lead a normal life? Well dear friends, I have been there and back. It was a problem, the most serious in my life which took me and my family by complete surprise, and because my reasoning, judgement and coordination were primarily affected it would seem that this affliction was insurmountable.

For 4 years I was taking what amounted to the treatment on an ad hoc basis mainly to please my family. There was no conviction in my life that anything was wrong. Then one evening in September 1976, thinking and living a relatively mundane life and working at the time in a factory, I had a spiritual revelation which changed the whole course of my life. The Mother of God, not my psychiatrist, hospital, or doctor, but the Queen of Heaven convinced me to take my treatment on a regular basis, by just putting this thought in my mind.

Dear people, I could relate my religious convictions all night about the arguments for (there are no arguments against) being a Roman Catholic. Why schizophrenics should take their long term treatment (sometimes for the rest of their lives, as in my case) on a regular basis purely from a religious and medical point of view. But I shall not impose my beliefs on you. What I will say is that if a patient is ever going to recover, the administration of the drugs are absolutely necessary, and without this regular supply of medication they do not have a hope in hell of leading a normal life.

In most, if not all cases, there is a chemical deficiency which the drugs replace, without which a normal life cannot be led. If Catholicism is taken up as "part of the treatment" and Holy Mass is attended and the Communion received, well then this can only help. In my case the treatment and the Church go hand in hand, in which if I gave up one I wouldn't be supported by the other and my world would crumble. As it is I have held a job for over 6 years and now intend to embark on a scientific career, starting with a full-time course at college in September. There is no doubt at all in my mind of the importance of my Faith, which has other virtues apart from the ones mentioned.

Having resolved to take the treatment regularly, I found that I was regaining interest in myself, in people and in my work. In fact my love life took on a completely new meaning for me. Having never actually resolved not to marry, I was more or less convinced that marriage was not for me at least the responsibilities seemed too great. But after a year or so of having

taken my tablets regularly, I found I was thinking more about the opposite sex than ever before and not only about sex. Love, for about the first time in my life was taking on a new dimension. I found that my initial fears about asking a girl for a dance was disappearing, and I was becoming more forward with my advances. Yes, life was definitely becoming more favourable, although this took some time to come about and only because of my regular taking of my drugs.

The work I was doing at the time was also coming under the jurisdiction of the drugs in that having shirked from responsibility for some time, I was beginning to accept and act more responsibly towards my work and to be more responsible in general. Not only this, but I was beginning to enjoy the working week even working in the factory where I was.

However, in the middle of 1977 I decided that I could do better for myself than waste my time and talents in a factory, and applied for a clerical job with the Post Office. Armed with my 5 O Levels and a few C.S.E.'s, I took their Maths and English tests with eight other candidates. I was the only one that passed and having passed the interview, I was rejected for the post on account of my past medical history, without so much as a suggestion of a medical examination to convince them that I was a capable employee.

Anyway, not deterred too much and my Faith being strengthened daily, I applied again this time with Export Credits Guarantee Dept., a branch of the Civil Service who are now my present employers. My integrity being what it is I gave them full details of medical and other history, which resulted in two medical examinations, one with a Harley Street psychiatrist, After other formalities were ironed out, I entered the Service at the beginning of June 1978. I was on a two year probation period, where my attendance would be closely monitored, especially from the medical aspect. In June 1980 I got my Establishment in the Civil Service as one who satisfactorily completed their probationary period, where I now am today.

Having got this far where do I go from here? Well, I have just been accepted at my local College to do an OND course in science for the next 2 years, starting in September leading to university to pick up where I left off ten years ago. So you see dear friends, that although “felled” by a huge blow in the prime of my life, I managed to pick myself up and even assert myself in life. What may you ask is my secret? Well, basically two words, Jesus Christ and all he stands for in the Catholic Faith, which one can accept or reject. If rejected, failure. If accepted utter success, my ordered and progressive life being the result of my acceptance. God Bless.

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