

+ Most Rev. Michael J. Sheehan  
Archbishop of Santa Fe

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I am now entering my 25<sup>th</sup> year as Bishop in the Catholic Church. One of my greatest responsibilities as a Successor to the Apostles is the care that I give to my priests. In Lubbock, Texas as Bishop there for 10 years, and now almost 15 years in Santa Fe, the wellbeing of our priests has been the top priority.

Priests give themselves in an incredible way to the service of God and the people. Especially now with the crunch of our priest shortage, active priests are called upon to spend every waking hour in ministry of some kind.

I am convinced that the price of clerical wellbeing is a balanced lifestyle. Surely we must give ourselves over to hard work as Pope John Paul II often said. But we must also have time for prayer, for exercise, for friends and family, and for moments of recreation. A balanced lifestyle is critically important, especially if we are going to remain healthy and free to do God's work.

Substance abuse is a great scourge for our American society. Priests are not exempt from the temptations to allow themselves to get trapped with alcohol, drugs, gambling and sexual sin. I am grateful to Guest House for the fine work that they have done through many years in helping our clergy and religious with different problems of substance abuse and addiction. Certainly there are priests in my own Archdiocese who have benefited greatly from the program and are leading productive and happy priestly lives.

The combination of psychological and psychiatric skills, together with medical doctors, spiritual directors and staff provide a balanced program to help those trapped in addictions to come to terms with the reality of the problem and to use the means available to obtain freedom again.

May God bless all those involved in Guest House and similar programs of treatment for our clergy and religious. God's blessings upon you all!