

AIDS and God and you / Catholic AIDS Link.

Contributors

Catholic AIDS Link

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Wellcome Collection
183 Euston Road
London NW1 2BE UK
T +44 (0)20 7611 8722
E library@wellcomecollection.org
<https://wellcomecollection.org>

AIDS and GOD and You



" When one member of the Body suffers the whole Body suffers"

When someone in your family has AIDS or HIV (the virus that can lead to AIDS), will they be able to turn to you and know you will respond with acceptance, understanding and support?

What is our Christian understanding of AIDS?

"AIDS is God's curse on homosexuals."

"NO."

Ours is a God who offers us blessing not curse, healing not illness, life not death.

Ours is a God who accepts and loves us as we are.

AIDS is anyway not a "gay disease".

Worldwide, AIDS affects far more heterosexuals, women as well as men, children as well as adults.

"Aids is God's punishment for promiscuity."

NO."

Although HIV can be transmitted sexually, it is not a disease of promiscuity.

In the Third World, it is also a disease of poverty because blood supplies cannot always be screened and needles used for vaccination sometimes have to be re-used.

World-wide, babies may acquire the virus in the womb and other people may contract the virus from contaminated blood supplies.

"People have brought it on themselves."

"NO."

AIDS is a newly recognised disease. It has a very long incubation period.

Many people with the virus or the disease today probably acquired it long before anyone knew how it was passed on.

"Aids is about Them not about Us."

NO."

If AIDS affects one of God's children, it affects all of us. As Christians, we cannot separate ourselves from others as if in some way we were better.

We need to look at the plank in our own eye - the way we have prejudged people with AIDS as sinners and tried to exclude them from the love of God.

"Then who is to blame?"

"NO ONE."

AIDS is a result of a virus, not the punishment of God.

Jesus taught us not to assume that illness is the result of sin.

He wants us to reach out and touch those who are suffering.

Through accepting and welcoming them, we accept and welcome God.

So what can we do?

THINK AGAIN

- Reconsider our assumptions about people with AIDS
- Recognise the hurt this has caused them and God
- Repent the way we have so often judged without understanding.

PRAY

- For people with AIDS
- For those who love and care for them
- For those who still condemn people with AIDS.

START AGAIN

- Draw close to people with AIDS to listen and to learn
- Learn that they need acceptance, understanding and support
- Respond to their needs
- Welcome and value them for what they have given to us
- Challenge those who condemn them.

This leaflet is based on material from 'Time for Support' (Manchester) adapted by CHAI (Christians in Hackney AIDS Initiative), 1991. Published, with permission, by CAL, 1991.

Catholic AIDS Link

P.O. Box 646
London E9 6QP.

Please remember people with HIV related conditions here and throughout the world; their families and friends; those who care for them, the many agencies who offer support and those involved in research.

*Blessed are you, our God, for in Jesus you show us the image of your glory. We give thanks for the gospel of healing and liberation which is preached to the whole Church in the ministry of those with HIV or AIDS. May we recognise that it is the real body of Christ which suffers at this time through HIV and AIDS. It is the real mind of Christ which is racked by fear and confusion. It is the real image of God in Christ which is blasphemed in prejudice, oppression and poverty. May we see in this crisis, loving God, not punishment but the place where God is most powerfully at work in Jesus Christ, and where, as sisters and brothers, we can lead each other to life in all its fullness, given in the same Christ our Lord.
Amen.*

What is CAL ?

Catholic AIDS Link is a group offering non-judgemental, spiritual, emotional, practical, and financial support to those affected by HIV/AIDS.