

PREFACE

A person might ask, “Why publish a book on recovery for Christian people?” Or, “Why publish a book on Christianity for recovering people?” There seems to be an underlying assumption that either group might be offended by a relationship with the other. *A Year To Remember* is a milestone achievement for bringing these two groups together. The import of this coming together lies in the fact that there is so much to be gained by the relationship between the recovering person and the church. *A Year To Remember* captures on a week-to-week basis the thrill of life discovery that comes to anyone who has ever struggled through an addiction experience, one day at a time. At the same time, the message of Christianity speaks loud and clear to ears that are open to hear the unmistakable message of life, love and fulfillment.

Reverend Bruce Van Blair is a recovering alcoholic. As such, he was spared no pain or misery in his own coming to grips with his faith and his life. His own struggle to make sense out of a battered and shattered life was no less than that of anyone coming off the street to seek help with his or her alcoholism. Reverend Van Blair began his journey with Step One. The gift to the recovery field of his book is the manner in which he uses both twelve-step recovery and the Christian message to invigorate his journey, his recovery. He swings the door of the church open to the addict. At the same time, he invites church people to consider their need for recovery.

A Year To Remember has fifty-two messages that are totally devoid of moralistic judgments and high-handed platitudes of what people ought to be like. The book quite simply grounds twelve-step recovery in the faith from which such programs were spawned, and illuminates the Christian way as a fantastic resource for recovering people. I experienced in *A Year To Remember* a kind of enthusiasm and inspiration that set me off at a very deep level. We who are recovering need an infusion of spirituality on a regular basis. We go to meetings, we call other recovering people, we work our program. We do it all so that we might continue to stay sober and live happy, joyous and free. Even more importantly, we are called to carry the

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message to others who still suffer, for it is our experience that we cannot keep what we have gained if we do not give it away. It is precisely our own cure that we not only want to share, but indeed must share, if we are to stay cured.

This sense of hope and salvation was precisely the spirit-filled enthusiasm that the early church embodied as it carried the Christian message to all corners of the world. Before the church became embroiled in a struggle over dogma, doctrine and institutions, there was a sense of purpose and destiny that bears remarkable similarity to the recovering community. It is precisely at this point of convergence that *A Year To Remember* was written.

Reverend Van Blair has written a wonderful book that, if nursed over the course of a year, will provide you with weekly doses of deep spiritual insights. You can feel him wrestling with his own faith and recovery, discovering exciting new connections between them, and sharing it all very openly with his congregation. You may find yourself feeling more deeply in touch with your own spirituality as a result. (You need not worry about being converted to anything.) You *will* experience being put more deeply in touch with your life. We believe that as a direct result, the artificial barriers which have separated these two great communities will come down, and that they can appreciate each other in a rich and rewarding way.

Therefore, afford yourself the gift of this treasure. Open your heart, your mind, your soul each week, as slowly as you like. You will soon discover, we believe, that you, too, have *A Year To Remember*.

Pat Moriarty
Glen Abbey Books