

Title: Dismantling the Shame of Suicide
Rise & Shine, February 28th

Mark 8:31-38

Jesus began to teach his disciples that the Son of Man must undergo great suffering, and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again. He said all this quite openly. And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. But turning and looking at his disciples, he rebuked Peter and said, “Get behind me, Satan! For you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things.”

He called the crowd with his disciples, and said to them, “If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake, and for the sake of the gospel, will save it. For what will it profit them to gain the whole world and forfeit their life? Indeed, what can they give in return for their life? Those who are ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of them the Son of Man will also be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.”

Commentary by Facilitator the Rev. Melanie W. J. Slane:

Societal stigma surrounding death by suicide is an undeniably painful topic of discussion, so much so, that we rarely speak of it. Such anonymity adds to the shame we feel at the loss of life. Prolonged isolation and loss of interpersonal interaction during the pandemic has resulted in a 96% increase nationwide in the number of young people attempting death by suicide. This Sunday we will discuss together, the pervasiveness of despair in “this adulterous and sinful generation” and what we can do as followers of Jesus to change the narrative by bringing light and hope to those who suffer.

In the News:

For Some Teens, It’s Been a Year of Anxiety and Trips to the E.R.

When the pandemic first hit the Bay Area last spring, Ann thought that her son, a 17-year-old senior, was finally on track to finish high school. He had kicked a heavy marijuana habit and was studying in virtual classes while school was closed.

The first wave of stay-at-home orders shut down his usual routines — sports, playing music with friends. But the stability didn’t last.

“The social isolation since then, over all this time, it just got to him,” said Ann, a consultant living in suburban San Francisco. She, like the other parents in this article, asked that her last name be omitted for privacy and to protect her child. “This is a charming, funny kid, also sensitive and anxious,” she said. “He couldn’t find a job; he couldn’t really go out. And he started using marijuana again, and Xanax.”

The teenager’s frustration finally boiled over this month, when he deliberately cut himself.

“We called 911, and he was taken to the emergency room,” his mother said. “But there they just stitched him up and released him.” The doctors sent him home, she said, “with no support, no therapy, nothing.”

Continue reading *For Some Teens, It’s Been a Year of Anxiety and Trips to the E.R.* by Benedict Carey in *The New York Times* <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/02/23/health/coronavirus-mental-health-teens.html?smid=url-share>

Suicide Ideation and Attempts in a Pediatric Emergency Department Before and During COVID-19

Suicide is the 2nd leading cause of death among children and adolescents, ages 10-17, in the United States and suicide rates have increased in the age group over the past 20 years. These statistics coincide with recent literature that revealed a 92% increase in annual Emergency Department (ED) visits for suicide ideation and attempts for children, without a statistically significant increase in overall ED visits. Additionally, youth suicide related behaviors result in 4 to 5 emergency department visits per year for every 1,000 youth, ages 15-19 years, costing an estimated \$15.5 billion, annually.

Continue reading *Suicide Ideation and Attempts in a Pediatric Emergency Department Before and During COVID-19* by Ryn M. Hill, PhD, Katrina Rufino, PhD, Sherin Kurian, MD, Johanna Saxena, BS, BS, Kirti Saxena, MD, Laurel Williams, DO in *Pediatrics*, Official Journal of the American Academy of Pediatrics <https://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/pediatrics/early/2020/12/15/peds.2020-029280.full.pdf>