

DESERT STREAM MINISTRIES

Rediscovering Our Lost Fullness

2022 Year-End Report



“What Christ demands from...all His listeners in the Sermon on the Mount clearly belongs to that interior space in which man—precisely the one who listens—must rediscover the lost fullness of his humanity and want to regain it.” (*Theology of the Body* 43:7)

As the leader of Living Waters USA, I love ministering with a small but mighty healing army. Here you'll find stories of these faithful members.

They've each resumed a personal adventure of “rediscovering their lost fullness.” Their healing journey equips them to be agents of Jesus' mercy.

Deeper than any fracture remains a fullness no Edenic fall, no disorder, no neglect or abuse can destroy. Jesus comes to rediscover that fullness in each of us!

Marco Casanova

The Power of Jesus' Name

To rediscover the lost fullness of humanity is no easy road. Though Jesus does the heavy lifting, we still experience the growing pains of finally breaking out of our scarred-up wounds. I am still in the beginning steps of this journey, still reveling in what it feels like to have a heart made of flesh once again.

When I first attended Living Waters in 2021, my heart was most certainly stone. I saw myself as a battle-hardened ICU nurse coming from two years of a pandemic filled with death. No one could understand where I was coming from, nor did I let them. The numbness of my stony heart only allowed me to feel a small amount of rage directed towards myself and those around me. I voluntarily cut myself off from a merciful relationship with myself, God, and my surrounding brothers and sisters.

Through the slow and consistent work of my sisters in Living Waters, God led me to renouncing false visions of others and myself, especially the lie of Him as a distant

Father. He gently scraped the eschar off my wounds, reactivating the fullness of my emotions and personality. His deep work led me to a central wound of self-hatred and suicidal ideation: the belief that I was so lost, hopeless, and worthless that I would rather kill myself than try to offer myself as a good gift.

Once the light of Jesus revealed this suicidal thought, I rejected it, renouncing it in the name of Jesus. What followed was months of growing pains, learning to live once again with emotions and a heart of flesh that can give to and receive others. The journey to rediscovering my lost fullness has only just begun. Jesus first obliterated the barriers that disconnected me from myself; now I have the fullness to approach others with the fiery love of the Father that makes all things new. I can confidently say that God, abounding in mercy, has cut suicidal ideation from my life. If you simply don't know where to start in your journey of rediscovering fullness, begin with invoking the powerful name of Jesus. With it, we will not fail.

Sarah Downey

Confused to Convicted

Conviction of heart does not come easily for me. On top of that, years of living under cultural shame, fear and self-condemnation had made it even harder. But I felt convicted when faced with Jesus' question to the disciples, “But who do you say that I am?” (Mt 16:15). In giving Jesus permission to access my hardened heart, He has revealed who He is to me. That began the long journey of rediscovering my lost fullness.

Back in 2020, I hit rock bottom and was desperate for a way out. Deep layers of abuse, same-sex attraction, and years of addiction had left me in deep isolation and denial. Trying to be in control of my brokenness was emotionally and spiritually exhausting. A Christian counselor, whom I was seeing at the time, recommended that I join

Living Waters. Experiencing healing through listening prayer and public confession was uncomfortable for me as a Catholic. Simultaneously, the familiar feelings of shame and fear made me want to check out. But, by the grace of God, I was able to stay until the end of the program. Living Waters has made me realize that I need other members of the broken body of Christ to help me heal. In the confidentiality of the small group, I felt safe and willing to be vulnerable. As the weeks went by, I was touched profoundly by the constant downpour of Jesus' mercy and forgiveness. He has drawn me deeper into His wounds. There, I experienced the intimacy of God's fatherhood for me as His beloved child. For the first time, I felt known and loved by our Father.

In retrospect, Living Waters gave me a clear language to speak into my identity crisis. In declaring my belief of who God is to me, I was able to rediscover my true identity based on who I am in God. Being grounded in my identity as a child of God, I was then able to move forward in life. I now feel convicted to be a conduit to lead many other broken and wounded souls to experience the Father's love.

Loren Tran

Hope for Fullness

There is a German word, *sehnsucht*, that means "a longing for a fulfillment that cannot be explained and that one has never experienced." It's that intuitive sense that there is a completeness, a place where we genuinely belong, where we are free, where we are welcomed and able to be fully ourselves. Most of us spend much of the first half of our lives frenetically trying to satiate that *sehnsucht* with some addictive combination of sex, drugs and rock-n-roll with a hefty dose of power, vanity and materialism thrown in for good measure. It's the age-old turn to self for what our particular "I" needs to feel happy, even as that happiness is always just out of reach.

If we're lucky, we hit a wall -- or rock bottom -- where we very concretely realize that the fulfillment we seek is not to be found in our addictions. Relationships are broken, health is damaged, minds are confused, spirits are exhausted. In that dark place, though, we are not forgotten by the God of the universe. Many of us find the discipleship and prayer ministry groups of Living Waters at this painful still-point.

Mercifully, rather than barging in with a pat solution of "... and heeeeeeeere's Jesus!", they enter gently, sharing our deep desires and brokenness, our longing for fullness, and they whisper, "That desire of yours? It is good and holy. The same *sehnsucht* that fueled your addictions is your homing device calling you into a life-giving relationship with your Creator. Nothing you have ever done has the power to annihilate the Living God in you. You have not been left orphaned."

Rather than shiny methods of suppressing or hiding our broken parts, Living Waters gifted leaders show us how to get to the bottom of our addictions and see them for what they are: false idols. They teach us to pray by modeling how to open our desires and brokenness to the broken and merciful heart of Jesus on the Cross. And they give us hope in Christ's resurrection as we encounter the God who desires our wholeness, belonging and authentic freedom infinitely more than we ever could.

Jeanette Clark

Uncovering the True Self

Three years ago, when I was first introduced to Living Waters by way of invitation from Marco, I thought I was "fine". I was living sacramentally, but I had a divided heart.

I lived for years in the throes of the hook up culture, and these wounds were still fresh. The lifestyle seemed so normalized at the time, particularly in a big northeast city. I had no idea

that I was actually self-medicating, covering something deeper and unrelated to my sexuality.

Growing up, I was raised in an affluent and white Kansas City suburb, except I was none of those things. We lived modestly, and as a Mexican, I was a shade darker than everyone else and my mom spoke a different native language. I felt different.

Years of insecurities piled up and I began to believe the lie that I needed to “perform” for love: through my career, my looks, my personality, basically anything that was surface level. Hooking up was my measuring stick. If I did, it meant I could be loved. I could be wanted. I could be accepted.

Despite no longer living in the hook-up culture, my insecurities were still present. I continued to act out of them, even if I wasn't aware of their presence within me. Living Waters acted as a rake, removing the foliage that covered my insecurities and teaching me to expose them to the Lord AND His body. Living Waters allowed me to witness the power of the Holy Spirit, present in a rich theology and community. Through prayer, the sacraments, and the continual exposure of these insecurities to His body, the Lord continues to bring me closer to who He created.

Andrew Marquez

Healer Jesus Summons My Wounds

Living Waters is unlike anything else I've known or experienced. The secret to Living Waters? Prayer. Faith. Trust. The Holy Spirit evoked these within me, but even more, through the work of Living Waters, I received hope. It's quite simple actually: prayer in Living Waters led me to Jesus, and Jesus gave me hope.

I've had an addiction to pornography and masturbation for over 15 years,

though I was born and raised a Catholic, a child of God and a member of Christ's body. My journey of pursuing holiness with the Lord started some time ago. Soon after I began, I deeply regressed into sexual sin and hopelessness.

My journey of restoration has taken years, with varying degrees of effort, investment, and time. In it, I have tried to remain constant and forward-looking, walking through it all with Christ. Initially, I took charge: I learned about my addiction, joined groups, had accountability partners, started groups of my own and even paid for counseling. But the cycle of my addiction remained: looking at porn, masturbating for relief and returning to God in confession on my knees. There seemed to be no other way.

But then came Living Waters and the potent power of listening prayer. My wounds and potential for wholeness were laid bare before me and the members of my small group, with Christ as the patient and attentive mediator. Living Waters was one of the most radical, uncomfortable, and painful spiritual experiences I've ever endured, but also one of the most fruitful. It showed me where I was broken and how to invite Christ, though the help of others, to the source of this brokenness.

I have been reformed: I now perceive others, myself, and God differently. Everyone needs Living Waters because everyone needs Christ in their wounds.

Gabriel Rizk

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Becoming a Community of Clarity

In an hour when the fractured are called whole and the whole are called fractured, Living Waters shines brightly with courageous clarity and faith-filled compassion. Rather than pointing the finger towards a crumbling culture, Living Waters stands as an unshakeable pillar, offering a gift to the church in its worthy mission of calling brokenness broken and wholeness whole. Living Waters has continued to offer tools for the Church to courageously recover the greatness of God's image in our shattered humanity.

As a leader in the body of Christ, I have tremendously benefitted from this ministry. The clarity in its teachings have stabilized our community in truth and love. The vulnerability and victories shared in the small groups have caused faith to arise in those of us seeking to run the race of recovering our true selves.

"Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen" (Heb 11:1). The writer of Hebrews continues by sharing about the lives of saints and how they overcame. The real lives of these saints are "the substance" we are hoping for and "the evidence" that recovering our true selves is possible. We need present-day witnesses of these lives, with real hurts, fears, failures, and victories, those lives that have embraced the journey of the recovery process.

One of the participants of our past Living Waters testified that being a gift to women was not on the table prior to this group. Now it is! By Living Waters offering its own cloud of witnesses, participants are challenged every week to throw off the weights of the culture and the sin that so easily entangles and to courageously run the race of recovering their true selves and fighting the good fight of image bearing!

Cheryl Allen



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PUBLISHER/EDITOR

Andrew Comiskey

Mission Statement

Based on Jesus' mercy and the dignity of men and women made in God's image, we equip Christians to gather in pursuit of radical wholeness.

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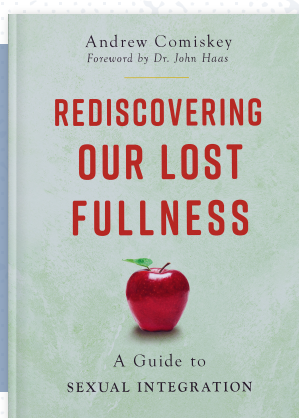
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Loren Tran

Rediscovering Our Lost Fullness

A Guide to Sexual Integration

by Andrew Comiskey



Get the new book from Desert Stream's founding director Andrew Comiskey.

Andrew Comiskey, founder of Desert Stream/Living Waters Ministries for those struggling sexually, shares here his profound experience in moving from brokenness (including same-sex desires) to a healthy and renewed Christian life. The Church's clear, powerful teachings on marriage and family helped him control his passions and live a sexually integrated life. With candor and grace, Comiskey recounts real-life stories of people who were freed from the grip of sexual disorders. You'll see how darkness is dispelled in those who seek the presence of the Crucified Christ and how they gained control over their physical, emotional, and psychological sins. In page after page, you will learn to accept the person God created you to be and celebrate authentic human dignity. You will also discover how:

- The Holy Eucharist is our remedy for impurity and fortifies us in the battle for holiness
- Persons pursuing religious vocations can integrate their sexuality
- The Cross of Christ helps us to carry little crosses and so love others with an undivided heart
- We need strong relationships in the community of believers to avoid occasions of sin
- "Spiritual chastity" is important in forming personalism and sexual chastity
- Divine Mercy provides the secret to restoring authentic intimacy in Christ

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