

## *Thomas' Testimony*

My name is Thomas, and I am thirty years old. I was born into a Roman Catholic family, and I grew up in Springfield, Tallaght. I am the second eldest in my family. (I have four brothers and one sister.)

My family moved to Tymonville Road when I was four years old. Tymonville was a good area to grow up in at the time. It was a new housing estate, and the neighbours at the time were quite friendly. I was reasonably good in school — always in the top of my class. I was not much of a regular church-goer, and neither was my family. The only occasion when we would go to church was Christmas time. Apart from that, we were not the best people for attending church.

Growing up in Tymonville was quite good when I was a child. The estate was made up of young married couples; and there were a lot of children around, too. I had a good ethic in school. I enjoyed going to school and doing my homework when I got home. I would play football most of the day, too.

My life started to change when I finished primary school in St. Aongus. I started to smoke in my last year at that school. I went to Tallaght Community School the next year. That was when I began to hang around with the wrong crowd. I started to smoke a lot more; and then I moved on to marijuana. My studies in school decreased, and my behaviour toward my homework and my teachers began to change. Not really knowing how it would affect me, I tried to be the class clown. I was asked to leave after four years in the school. This left me with lots of free time, and with nothing to do.

I started to hang around my estate with other people that were not in school anymore; and that's when my life turned for the worst. I began to steal to get cigarettes and hash, and then I moved on to L.S.D. and Ecstasy for about a year. The only way to pay for the drugs was to go out and steal. I was caught stealing a few times; and my parents were embarrassed and angry with me. This did not really stop me from doing what I wanted to do, because I was addicted.

When I was eighteen, I decided to try Heroin for the first time. I tried it out of curiosity, and also because I wanted to be in with the rest of my so-called "friends." When I tried it for the first time, I was in the back of a warehouse, and we set off the silent alarm. The next thing I knew, I was being chased by the Guards, and they caught me. It was a bad experience. You would think that I would have stopped doing Heroin; but, unfortunately, I did not. I got such a taste for Heroin that night, that the very next I decided to get some more. From then on, everything in my life turned upside down. I was addicted to Heroin, and my life was miserable.

In order to come off Heroin, I was advised to start a Methadone programme. I was told that I would be on it for only about six months. Little did I know that I would be on it for the next ten years of my life.

From then on, my life seemed to pass right by me. I was what you would call a "functional addict," because I held down a job. As the years went past, I was increasing my methadone more and more. Then I started to take prescription tablets; and this became more and more frequent. I just couldn't see a way out.

My brother encouraged me to attend the Reformers Unanimous addictions programme, which is a Bible-based programme. To be honest, I could not really see how this would work for me. I attended anyway; and through the preaching on Friday, I began to realise that I was that I was a wicked sinner. I called upon the name of the Lord to cleanse me from my sins and save me. I knew from that day forward that I had a place in Heaven with the Lord Jesus.

I went into the Men's Home in September 2007; and through the power of the Holy Spirit, I came off all the substances to which I had been addicted. I praise God that I no longer have to poison my body with drugs. I praise God for the victory that He has given me over my addiction.

I graduated the Men's Home in January 2009. Since then, my life has been totally turned around. Now that I have Christ in me, I have a new purpose in life. God has restored the relationships between me and my family. Now I have friends that love me for who I am — as opposed to my addict friends, who always had some sort of angle to entice me into sin.