

Evening of Prayer for Mental Illness – Recovery and Understanding



- Sign of the Cross & Greeting

**May the grace and peace
of our Lord Jesus Christ
who healed the sick be with you all.**

- Introduction [Hope & Healing] **Fr. Matt**

As [a parish], we are deeply concerned with the heartbreaking prevalence of mental illness in our society and are taking action to address this tragic form of misery and sorrow.

Though not as apparent and familiar as general medical problems, mental illness is equally important and is uniquely challenging and burdensome. It strikes deep within the human soul, impacting and influencing a person's thoughts, emotions and behaviors; thereby affecting all aspects of a person's life—work and rest, family life and relationships, prayer and one's relationship with God.

Just as Christ never abandons anyone, so also the Church never abandons those who suffer from mental illness. We encourage all Catholics – clergy, religious and the lay faithful – to partner with others of goodwill in this indispensable work of healing and caring for those with mental illness.

Our Catholic faith provides us with this consolation and this firm hope, which strengthens our resolve: In eternity with God, every beautiful thing in our lives that is now unfinished will be completed, all the good that is scattered will be gathered together, everything that is lost will be found, all hopes that are now thwarted will be realized and all that is broken will finally be restored.

- TAIZE Hymn (**Leslie's Choice**)

- Hope & Healing (**Fr. Matt**)

Jesus Christ's public life was a ministry of hope and healing. As Catholics, in imitation of our Lord, we are called to provide hope and healing to others.

We profess that every human life is sacred, that all people are created in the image and likeness of God and, therefore, a person's dignity and worth cannot be diminished by any condition, including mental illness.

We believe all baptized persons have unique gifts to offer and have a place in the Church, the body of Christ. Thus, we are all called to attend to those in our midst who

suffer in body or mind; we pledge to work together with families and loved ones, mental health professionals, community organizations, and all individuals and institutions that engage in this important work.

🌿 TAIZE Hymn (**Leslie's Choice**)

🌿 Witness Sharing (**Sylvia**)

🌿 TAIZE Hymn (**Leslie's Choice**)

🌿 Witness Sharing (**Matt**)

🌿 TAIZE Hymn (**Leslie's Choice**)

🌿 Hope & Healing (**Fr. Matt**)

Persons with mental illness often suffer in silence, hidden and unrecognized by others.

Consider this stark contrast: a person with a *medical* illness, such as cancer, will usually receive an outpouring of sympathy and support from their parish and community; a person diagnosed with a *mental* illness – such as depression, crippling anxiety, or bipolar disorder – frequently experiences isolation and inadequate support, often because of the unjust social stigma of mental illness.

This should not be so in our civic communities and cannot be so in our Catholic communities. Those living with a mental illness should never bear these burdens alone, nor should their families who struggle heroically to assist their loved ones. We Christians must encounter them, accompany them, comfort them and help bear their burdens in solidarity with them – offering our understanding, prayers, and tangible and ongoing assistance.

🌿 Candle Lighting Service (**Barbara Z**)

- We light the candle of **Truth** that God will help us dispel ignorance and misinformation about major depression, bipolar disorder, schizophrenia, severe anxiety and obsessive compulsive disorder. (Silent prayer) **KB**
- We light the candle of **Healing** that troubled minds and hearts, broken lives and relationships might be healed. (Silent prayer) **LN**
- We light the candle of **Understanding** that the darkness of stigma, labels, exclusion and marginalization might be dispelled for the sake of those touched by mental illness. (Silent prayer) **RZ**

- We light the candle of **Hope** for persons and families living with mental illness, for better treatment, for steadier recovery, for greater opportunity to work and serve. (Silent prayer) **KB**
- We light the candle of **Thankfulness** for compassionate, dedicated caregivers and mental health professionals; for new discoveries in brain research and better medications. (Silent prayer) **LN**
- We light the candle of **Faith** to dispel doubt and despair for those who have lost hope and are discouraged. (Silent prayer) **RZ**
- We light the candle of **Steadfast Love** to remind us of God's love and faithfulness, and to remind us to share the light of love and service for those living with mental illness. (Silent prayer) **MDS**

● The Lord's Prayer

● Closing Prayer (**Fr. Matt**)

Loving God, we pray today for those who are confronted by the sadness, ambiguity and confusion of mental illness, and for those upon whom they depend for attention and compassionate care.

Look with mercy on all whose afflictions bring them weakness, distress, confusion or isolation. Provide for them homes of dignity and peace; give to them understanding helpers and the willingness to accept help. Through Christ our Lord.

● Final Blessing

● Closing Hymn (**Christ Be Our Light**)