

# ***Vatican Highlights Association of Catholic Mental Health Ministers in Pope's Prayer for People with Depression***

*Pope makes video with Association's aid calling on Church to help those with mental health struggles*

**Scranton, PA, November 9, 2021--** As his prayer intention for the month of November, Pope Francis is calling on the Catholic Church to “pray that people who suffer from depression or burnout will find support and a light that opens them up to life.” The Holy Father requested these prayers in a [Pope Video](#) via the [Pope's Worldwide Prayer Network](#), made with the guidance and support of the [Association of Catholic Mental Health Ministers](#) (Catholic MHM).

The Association of Catholic Mental Health Ministers was born out of a need for education, resources, and servant laymen and women to respond to mental health crises. The President of the Association, Deacon Ed Shoener, was inspired to join with other dedicated people to establish the Association after his daughter Katie died by suicide in 2016 after a long battle with bipolar disorder. Katie's obituary went viral and was reported on around the world because it encouraged an open and honest conversation about mental illness and suicide. The response to his daughter's obituary made it clear to Deacon Shoener that there is a real need for mental health ministry in the Church. Together with the ministry's chaplain, Bishop John Dolan of the Diocese of San Diego, Catholic MHM has guided parishes through the process of creating a mental health ministry to provide spiritual support for those struggling with mental health issues, for their families, and for the entire parish community.

Catholic MHM sets out to make mental health ministry an integral and common ministry in the Church that is available in every Catholic parish and community. It is motivated by the prayer offered by Pope Francis on World Mental Health Day on October 10, 2021 “to remember our brothers and sisters affected by mental disorders and the victims, often young, of suicide. Let us pray for them and for their families, so that they are not left alone or discriminated against but welcomed and supported.” Catholic MHM provides spiritual support to people living with a mental illness to assist them in living in holiness and educating and informing the Catholic community about the issues, struggles, and joys that can be found in people living with a mental illness. The Association provides the tools, methods and insights that allow Catholic leaders to confidently minister to people with a mental illness without fear or prejudice.

The Vatican has long been vocal about the need for prayers and resources surrounding mental health struggles, particularly in light of the COVID-19 pandemic, which triggered a massive spike in mental health crises worldwide. For the month of November, the Pope calls on Catholic Christians to particularly remember and intercede for those who “experience extreme exhaustion—mental, emotional, affective, and physical exhaustion.”

The Holy Father also takes the time to guide the flock in his video on accompanying rather than instructing brothers and sisters battling mental health crosses. He also calls on the Church to assist those

overwhelmed by such burdens with the psychological support they need, using Christ as witness and example.

You can view this video on the following platforms:

- [Official website of The Pope Video](#)
- [YouTube channel of The Pope Video](#)
- [Facebook page of The Pope Video](#)
- [The Pope Video on Twitter](#)
- [The Pope Video on Instagram](#)
- [The Pope on Twitter @Pontifex](#)
- [The Pope on Instagram @Franciscus](#)

For more information and a complete press kit, visit <https://www.catholicmhm.org/media>.

To request an interview with Deacon Ed Shoener or Bishop John Dolan, contact Carrie Kline at [carriek@revolutionizingmissions.com](mailto:carriek@revolutionizingmissions.com).

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