

# *How to Bring Mental Health Ministry to Your Parish or Catholic Community*



Association of  
Catholic Mental  
Health Ministers

Deacon Ed Shoener  
President

## Lord, we Pray for those who have a Mental Illness

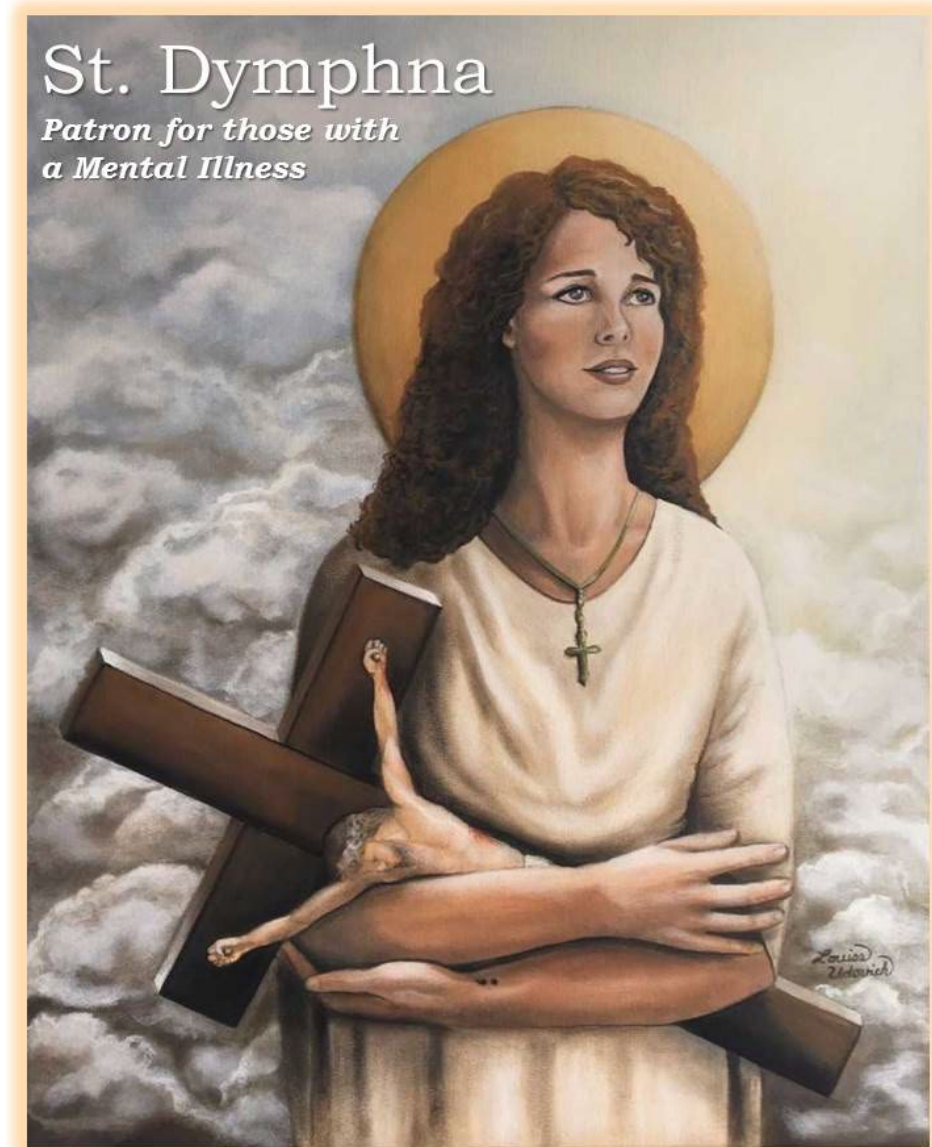
Help us understand that the way we talk about people with a mental illness affects the people themselves and how we treat the illness.

So often people who have a mental illness are known as their illness; people say that "she is bipolar" or "he is schizophrenic"; when we talk about mental illness, we should not use that phrase. People who have cancer are not cancer; those with heart disease are not heart disease. Let us always remember that people with a mental illness are not the illness – they are beautiful creations of God.

There is so much fear, ignorance and hurtful attitudes that the people who live with mental illness needlessly suffer further. Our society needs to provide resources to understand and treat mental illness. Help us support and be compassionate to those with a mental illness, every bit as much as we support those who suffer from any other illness.

Grant courage to those for whom we pray and fill them with hope. Help them to remember You love them; they are never alone.

***Saint Dymphna, Patron of those with a Mental Illness, pray for us***



The Pain is Real – but so is HOPE

# Three Concerns



Association of  
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1. Do clergy and other church leaders understand?
2. Will the Church will judge them?
3. Is there support in the Church?

## We Need to Tell Our Stories



# We Need To Tell Our Stories

- "We need more people discussing the realities of struggling with a mental illness and, just as you say, that it can be as difficult, painful, and sometimes terminal as any other serious physical illness."
- "People need to read this...in some small way it might begin to chip away at the stigma of mental illness. I have never understood why people treat those with mental illness differently than people with a physical illness."
- "God is using this for a good divine purpose, to educate others to be compassionate... do not be quick to judge because it can happen to you or anyone."

## The Washington Post

### **She 'loved life:' A grieving father wrote openly about suicide and mental illness in daughter's obituary**

By Colby Itkowitz August 17



Katie Shoener, pictured here at age 20. (Courtesy: Kelly Lamond)



# Principles of Catholic Mental Health Ministry

*“As pastors and bishops, we understand that mental health is a critical component of wellbeing. Therefore, ministering to those who suffer from mental illness is an essential part of the pastoral care of the Church.”*

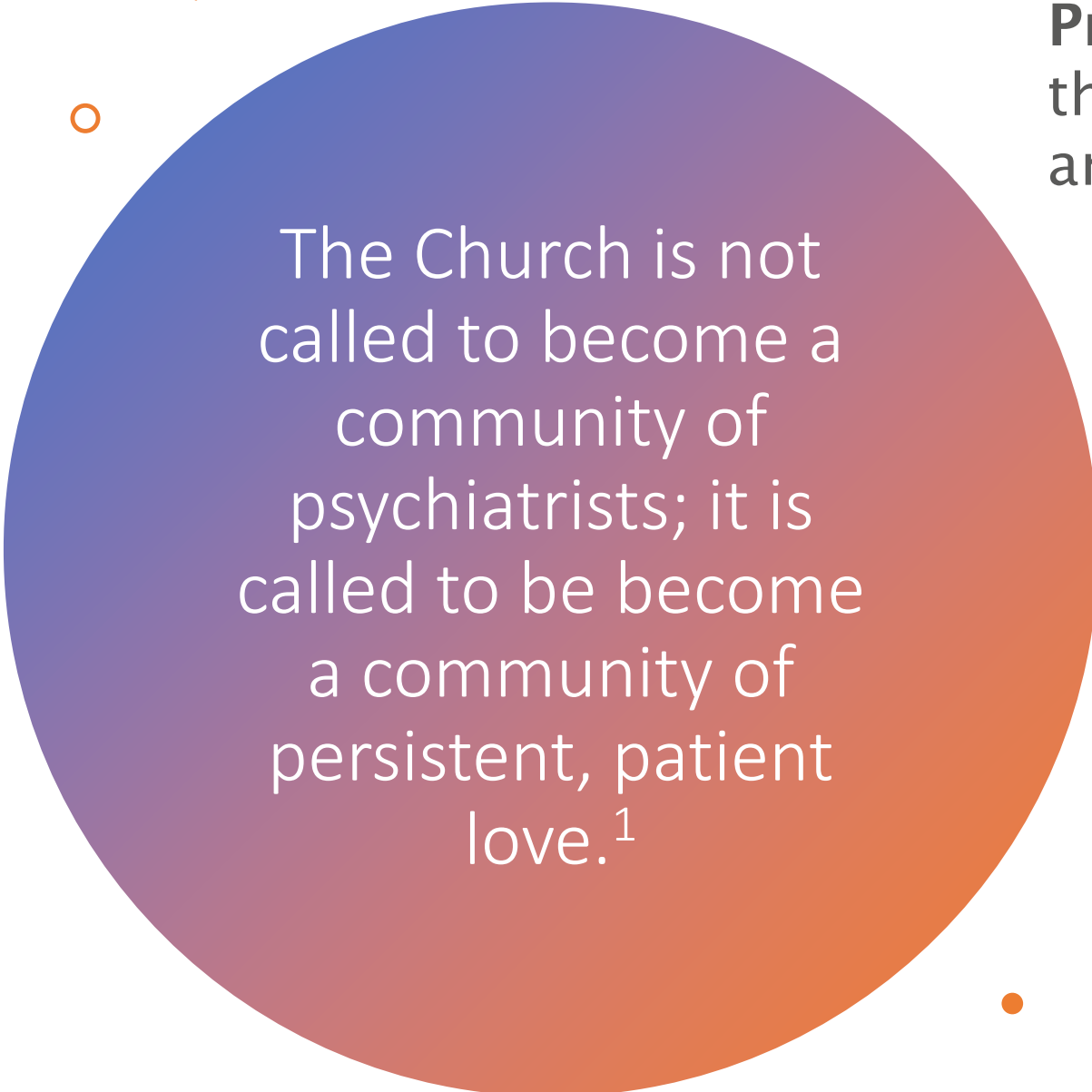

## HOPE AND HEALING

A PASTORAL LETTER FROM THE BISHOPS  
OF CALIFORNIA ON CARING FOR THOSE  
WHO SUFFER FROM MENTAL ILLNESS  
ADDRESSED TO ALL CATHOLICS AND  
PEOPLE OF GOODWILL



CALIFORNIA  
CATHOLIC  
CONFERENCE

BISHOPS OF CALIFORNIA  
May 2018



The Church is not called to become a community of psychiatrists; it is called to be become a community of persistent, patient love.<sup>1</sup>

## Principle 1: Christ calls us to attend to those who suffer from mental illness and provide hope and healing

- The Churches' call is to meet those with mental illness, to learn to love them with the love and the passion of Jesus and to offer them a place of belonging.
- The primary task of the Church is to love and heal without the demand for a cure.
- To say, "It is *good* that you exist."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Rev. Dr. John Swinton, Chair in Divinity and Religious Studies at the School of Divinity, History, and Philosophy, University of Aberdeen, Scotland.

<sup>2</sup> Principles of Catholic Theology by Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger (Pope Benedict XVI)

# Principle 2

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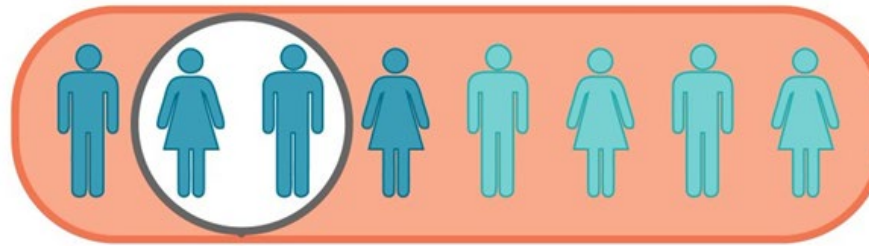
- The scope and burden of mental illness in our society is enormous.  
We are all affected by mental health concerns.

## Mental Health Matters For Everyone



**1 in 5**

American adults will have a diagnosable mental health condition in any given year<sup>1</sup>



**50  
PERCENT**

of Americans will meet the criteria for a diagnosable mental health condition sometime in their life, and half of those people will develop conditions by the age of 14.<sup>2</sup>

**MIIA**  
Mental Health America  
**B4Stage4**

Sources





**Principle 3.** Those suffering from mental illness should not be stigmatized or judged. Mental illness remains poorly understood even by clergy and others in positions of influence.

Prayer of Pope Francis on  
World Mental Health Day:

“I would like, to remember our brothers and sisters affected by mental disorders and also 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.”

Mental Health First Aid is a course that teaches you how to identify, understand and respond to signs of mental illnesses and substance use disorders.

The training gives you the skills you need to reach out and provide initial help and support to someone who may be developing a mental health or substance use problem or experiencing a crisis.



MENTAL  
HEALTH  
FIRST AID®

Q UESTION  
P ERSUADE  
R EFER



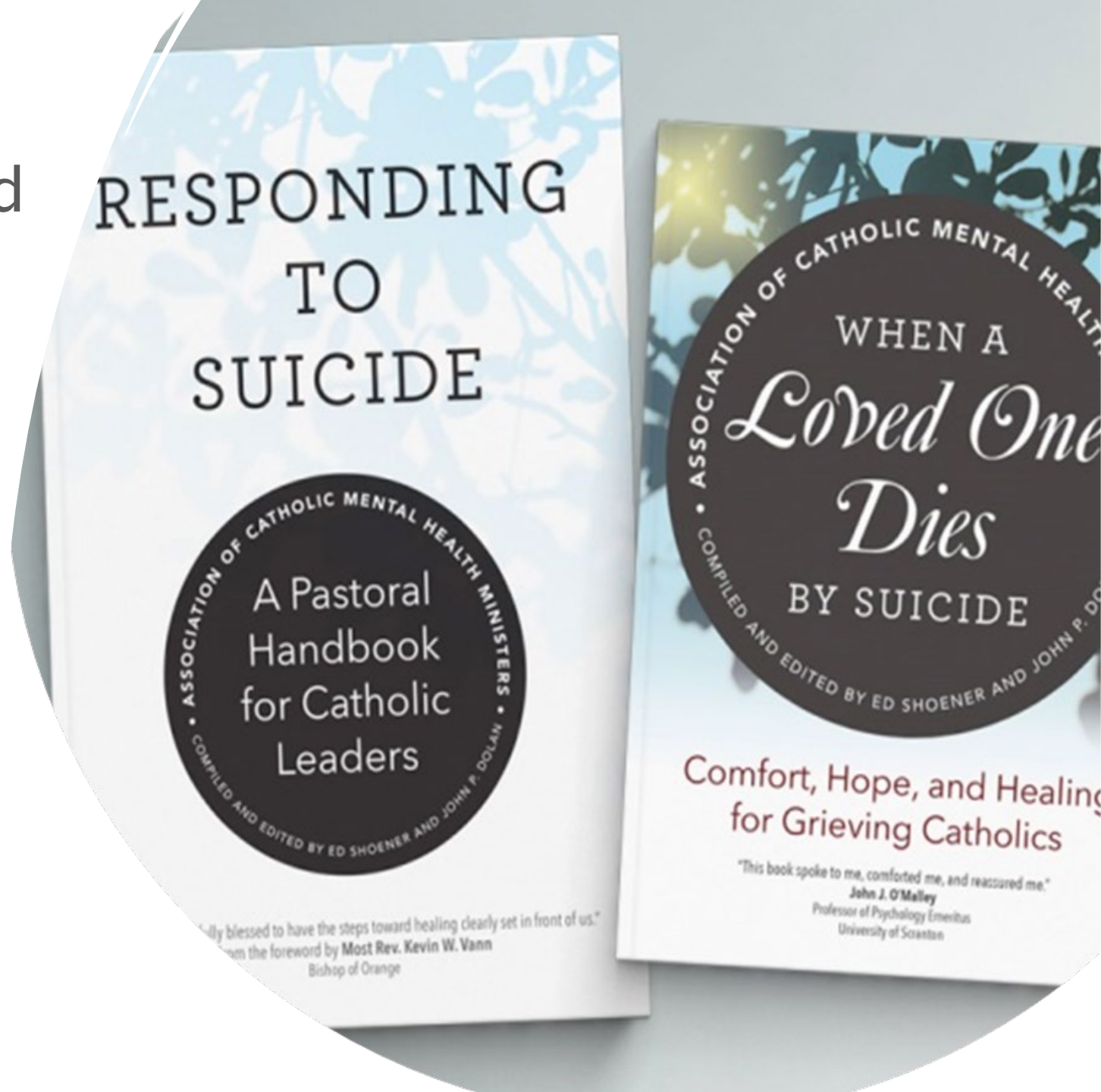
[qprinstitute.com](http://qprinstitute.com)

QPR  
For Suicide  
Prevention

*Ask a Question,  
Save a Life.*

## Principle 4. Those impacted by suicide need our compassionate response.

- Discussing the hard questions and accompanying the grieving
- The funeral for a person who died by suicide
- Prayer rite at the location of a suicide
- Grief support after a suicide – overcoming isolation and shame
- Youth ministry and suicide
- Parish mental health ministry







SANCTUARY  
Mental Health Ministries



The Association of  
Catholic Mental  
Health Ministers



WHEN A \_\_\_\_\_  
*Loved One Dies*  
\_\_\_\_\_ BY SUICIDE

*When a Loved One Dies By Suicide - Trailer*



## Principle 5:

The Church, health care professionals and scientific researchers should work together to improve mental health care.

*Psychiatry and mental health professionals have their place. But their tasks are different (although complementary) from the tasks of the Church.*

*"Hope and Healing"  
California Conference of Bishops, 2018*



### Mental Health Ministry

1. Accompaniment - Journey with others as they experience God.
2. Provide spiritual and social support: a renewed sense of meaning and purpose, feel grounded in faith or other spiritual practice, and increased connection to the faith community.
3. Faith-based and God-centered. It has to do with the presence of God in a relationship and experiencing His presence.



### Mental Health Treatment

1. A mental health diagnosis that manifests itself in a pervasive manner.
2. May involve several professionals to guide the treatment and to monitor medication management or any other medical concerns.
3. The goal of treatment is to reduce the symptoms. Success is defined by the absence of illness, distress or symptoms.

## Principle 6.

We must meet  
and attend to  
those in need  
where they are.

“To reach those who struggle with mental illness,  
we need to bolster the role of parish communities  
and also move beyond our zone of comfort and  
familiarity.”

- ❖ Parish Based Mental Health Ministry
- ❖ Mental Health Ministry Teams
- ❖ Liturgical Considerations
- ❖ Devotions to the Saints



# CATHOLIC MENTAL HEALTH MINISTRY

## GUIDELINES FOR IMPLEMENTATION

Wendell J. Callahan, PhD

Liberty Hebron, MA, LPCC

Alissa Willmerdinger, MA, LPCA

### Step One: Education

- Clergy and Staff

### Step Two: Covenant

- Mental Health Ministry Team commitment
- Commissioning Rite

### Step Three: Welcome

- Radical – include even difficult people
- Accompany

### Step Four: Support

- Education nights
- Witness Stories
- Active Outreach
- Support Group Meetings
- Resources and Referrals

### Step Five: Advocacy

- Within the Parish and the broader Church
- In the community

### Step Six: Evaluation

# Catholic Institute for Mental Health Ministry



## Introduction to Catholic Mental Health Ministry - EDU-X739P



Delivery Options: Online Fixed-Date

### Course Description

#### Discover How You Can Provide Impactful Mental Health Ministry to Your Community

This course was designed to provide 1) basic mental health literacy, 2) a rationale for Catholic Mental Health Ministry and 3) the elements of Catholic Mental Health Ministry. Guidelines for implementing mental health ministry in a parish or school will be explored.

### Learner Outcomes

- Develop basic mental health literacy as an understanding of common mental health problems, how to reduce stigma associated with mental illness and how to make appropriate referrals for mental health services
- Differentiate mental health treatment from mental health ministry
- Discover organizations that provide educational resources and other supports to mental health ministry
- Learn about specific liturgical resources for mental health ministry
- Explore specific technologies that support the implementation of mental health ministry
- Develop a plan for implementing a mental health ministry in their faith community

### Course Details

**Number of Units:** 1.0 graduate level extension credit(s) in semester hours

**Who Should Attend:** This course provides continuing education for Catholic lay ministers, religious, priests, deacons, and school administrators interested in implementing mental health ministries in their parishes or schools.

Enroll Now - Select a section to enroll in

EDU-X739P - 006

FA

Online Fixed-  
Date

Available

Add to Cart

Type: Online Fixed-Date  
Dates: Aug 30, 2022 to Oct 17, 2022

Course Format: Online Fixed-Date

Course Fee(s) : EDU Course Fee credit \$150.00  
(1 units)

Available for  
Extension Credit: 1 units

Instructor(s): Wendell Callahan, PhD

#### Section Notes:

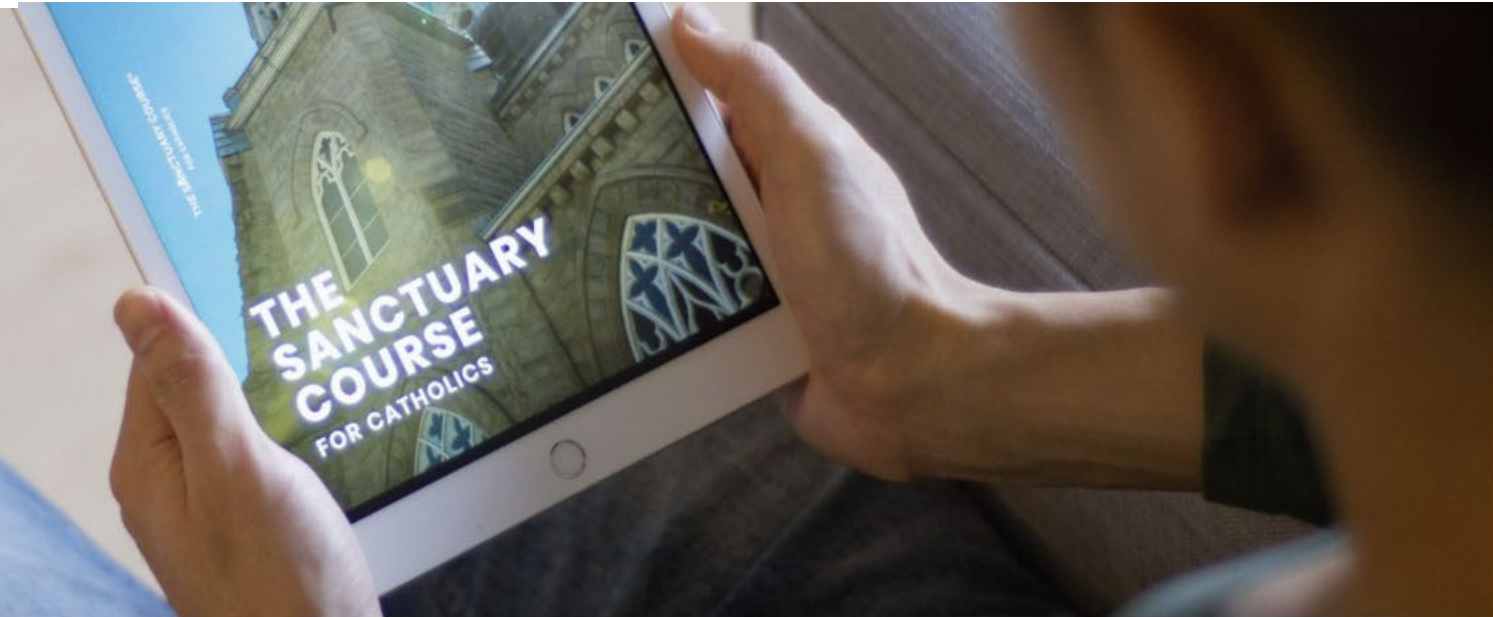
Once you have enrolled in your course, log in to your account to access the course Welcome Letter, which includes directions on how to access the Online Orientation and your online course.



# THE SANCTUARY COURSE FOR CATHOLICS

NOW AVAILABLE

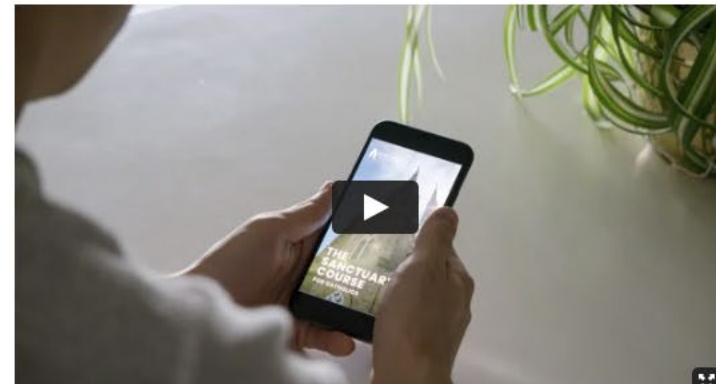
GET IT NOW



## ABOUT THE COURSE

### *What is The Sanctuary Course for Catholics?*

One in four people will be affected by a mental health problem at some point in their lives, yet the stigma surrounding mental illness silences many and prevents faith communities from responding compassionately and effectively. This eight-session course—designed for use in small groups—explores the realities of mental health and illness, as well as the vital need for faith-based community conversations about these topics. The sessions are accompanied by compelling films that feature the stories of Catholics living with mental health challenges, along with the insights of archbishops, theologians, and psychologists.





# Basic “Look” of a Robust Parish Mental Health Ministry

1. **Form a parish mental health ministry team** of at least 3 people and get some basic training for the team.
2. **Prepare a simple ministry plan for approval by the pastor**
3. **Introduce the topic to the Parish** with either a "Mental Health Illness with Grace - 5 Part Series" and/or the "Sanctuary for Catholics" Program
4. **Identify mental health resources in the community:** such as hospitals and other mental health care providers, that can be provided to families as needed.
5. **Parish Education:** Place reflections on mental health and in the parish bulletin/website. Mention specific mental health conditions and suicide in the intercessions. Host speakers or events on mental health topics. Maintain a simple web page with resources, news and posting of events
6. **Special Liturgies:** a May 15 (or thereabouts) St. Dymphna Mass, a Suicide Remembrance Mass and Healing masses.
7. **Spiritual Support Groups:** Facilitate a small faith sharing group for people who live with a mental illness and one for people, usually parents, who support someone with a serious mental illness.
8. **Home visits:** to people who are homebound because of their illnesses - social anxiety and other debilitating mental illnesses
9. **Hospital Visits:** Visit local psychiatric hospitals and mental health care facilities
10. **Support other parish ministries:** being the parish resource on mental health issues- for example work with the youth ministry team to periodically discuss mental health issues, work with the prison ministry to support their advocacy for better mental health care in prisons, etc.



Association of  
Catholic Mental  
Health Ministers

CatholicMHM.org



# A Healing Presence In Our Parishes

Working to Bring Mental Health Ministry to Every Catholic Parish

## Our Mission

We support Catholic parishes and dioceses in establishing mental health ministries. Mental health ministries provide vital spiritual accompaniment for people experiencing mental health challenges and mental illness, as well as those who care for them.

1. Arlington, VA
2. Boise
3. Boston
4. Chicago
5. Fall River
6. Galveston-Houston
7. Harrisburg
8. Hartford
9. Joliet
10. Kansas City, Kansas
11. Kansas City-St. Joseph
12. Knoxville
13. Los Angeles
14. Madison
15. Milwaukee
16. Newark
17. Oakland
18. Orange
19. Portland
20. Raleigh
21. Rapid City
22. Rockford
23. San Diego
24. San Francisco
25. San Jose
26. Scranton
27. Seattle
28. St. Augustine
29. Tulsa
30. Washington DC



CLICKTOPRAY



Pope's Worldwide  
Prayer Network



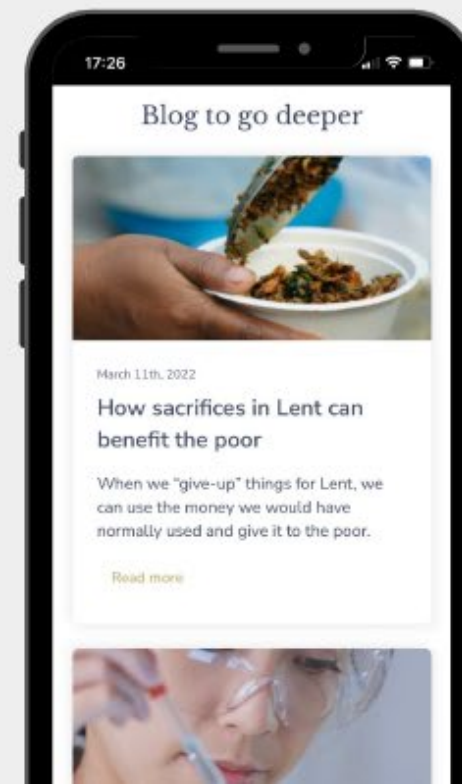
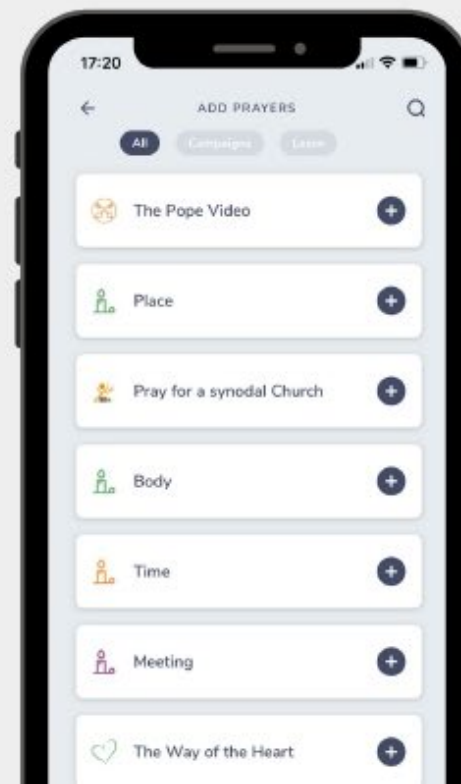
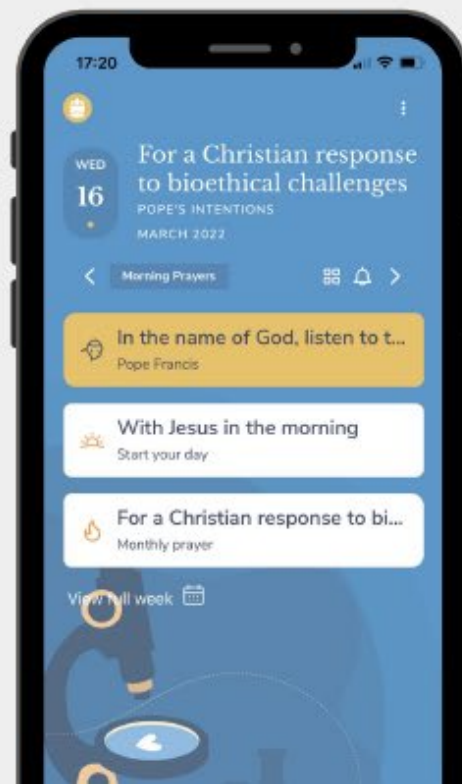
Association of  
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HEALTH MINISTERS

Pope's Prayer  
Intention

Daily prayers  
Prayer Agenda

School of  
Prayer  
Marketplace

Blog





## October 10th, 2022 - Day of Prayer for Mental Health

### Pope's Prayer For a Church Open to Everyone

We pray for the Church; ever faithful to, and courageous in preaching the Gospel, may the Church be a community of solidarity, fraternity and welcome, always living in an atmosphere of synodality.

#### Monthly Day of Prayer for Mental Health

We pray for a Church Open to Everyone. Pope Francis has said that we need "to fully overcome the stigma with which mental illness has often been branded to ensure that the culture of community prevails over the mentality of rejection." The Holy Father asks us "to remember our brothers and sisters who suffer from mental illness, and also victims – often young people – of suicide. Let us pray for them and their families, so that they are never left alone, or discriminated against, but instead are welcomed and supported."

[\(Click here to read the Monthly Day for Prayer for Mental Health on the Pope's Prayer Network\)](#)

MONTHLY DAY OF PRAYER  
FOR MENTAL HEALTH

"Overcome the  
stigma with which  
mental illness has  
often been branded"

Pope Francis



The Association of  
Catholic Mental  
Health Ministers



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Pope's Worldwide  
Prayer Network

# 2021/11 PEOPLE WHO SUFFER FROM DEPRESSION



Pope's Worldwide Prayer Network



The Pope Prayer Intention  
November 2021

People Who Suffer From  
Depression