

Prayers Addressing Mental Health for Youth and Young Adults

(Provided in The Sanctuary Youth Series Facilitation Guide)

A Prayer for Youth and Young Adults

Jesus Christ, King of the Universe,
to you we turn in humble prayer.
Look with favor upon all young people,
bearers of hope for the Church and the world.

Jesus Christ, companion
of youth and young adults,
bless the paths of discovery and discernment,
through times of joy and experiences of hardship,
with the constant love and support of your Church.

Jesus Christ, alive in the hearts
of all your people,
grant that we may
“journey together, young and old...
to nourish our enthusiasm, cause dreams to emerge,
awaken prophecies and enable hope to blossom.” *

Jesus Christ, Redeemer of all humankind,
open our hearts to encounter all young people,
to accompany and be in community together,
and as one Church, embark upon our holy mission.

Jesus Christ, in the company
of the Father and the Holy Spirit,
graciously hear our prayer
and be with us forevermore.

Amen. 1

* Pope Francis, *Christus Vivut*, 199

1. United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, *National Pastoral Guidebook for the Global Celebration of Young People: For the Annual*

Celebration of Youth and Young Adults in the United States of America on the Solemnity of Christ the King – A Resource for Catholic Leaders, 2,

accessed October 8, 2024, <https://www.usccb.org/resources/usccb-christ-the-king-guidebook.pdf>.

St. John of God Prayer

The Association of Catholic Mental Health Ministers (CMHM) is a lay association that seeks to eliminate stigma and see mental health ministry established as an integral ministry in every parish. Their website offers many prayer resources, including the following St. John of God prayer.

Lord, we pray for those who have a mental illness.

There is so much fear, ignorance, and so many harmful attitudes that the people who suffer from mental illness needlessly suffer further. Help us to support and be compassionate to those with a mental illness, every bit as much as we support those who suffer from any other illness. Let us always remember that people with a mental illness are not the illness—they are beautiful creations of God.

St. John of God, you understand and witnessed the difficulties of living with a mental illness. You lived in the darkness, but found hope. You wrote: “When you feel depressed, have recourse to the Passion of Jesus Christ, our Lord, and his precious wounds, and you will feel great consolation.”

Lord our God, grant courage to those for whom we pray and fill them with hope. If it is according to your divine will, grant them the recovery and cure they desire. Help them to remember you love them; they are never alone.

2. The Association of Catholic Mental Health Ministers, “Saint John of God Prayer,” accessed December 4, 2024,
https://www.thekatiefoundation.org/store/p17/Saint_John_of_God_Prayer_Card_%28English%29.html.

There Is So Much

The following prayer is drawn from *The Catholic Youth Prayer Book*—a resource for teens who want to learn more about prayer. In addition to offering prayers that speak to teens today, the book includes an overview of prayers from the Catholic tradition and methods for personal prayer.

To Jesus, who calmed the stormy sea:

There is so much pressure,

there is so much hurt,

there is so much confusion,

there is so much noise.

Jesus, please calm this storm,

so that I may

sit peacefully in this boat with you.

Amen.

3. *There Is So Much*, *The Catholic Youth Prayer Book*, by Mary Shrader, et al., edited by Robert Feduccia Jr. (Winona, MN: Saint Mary's

Press, 2006). Copyright © 2006 by Saint Mary's Press. All rights reserved. Used with permission.

Prayer to Our Lady of Lourdes

On February 11, 1858, an apparition of Mary appeared to St. Bernadette Soubirous in Lourdes, France. Since then, pilgrims have traveled from all over the world, seeking physical, mental, and spiritual healing. Our Lady of Lourdes is a special patroness for healing, and this prayer for individuals experiencing mental illness reminds us that we can always turn to her for help.

Loving God, you are always near to us, especially when we are weak, suffering and vulnerable. Reach out to those who experience mental illness.

Lift their burdens, calm their anxiety, and quiet their fears.

Surround them with your healing presence that they may know that they are not alone.

We ask this through the intercession of Our Lady of Lourdes and in the name of your Son, Jesus and the Holy Spirit, now and forever.

Amen.

4. Whitney Hetzel, "Mental Illness: Five Patron Saints to Invoke," The Catholic Company (April 7, 2016), accessed November 5, 2024,

<https://www.catholiccompany.com/magazine/mental-illness-patron-saints-6296?srsId=AfmBOopCn2pwqE8ori6SljA3DqqHKr0HquyGu>

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Prayer to Christ the Healer

The Congregation of Alexian Brothers is a lay order devoted to serving the sick, including individuals with mental health challenges. The Alexian Brothers' "Prayer to Christ the Healer" beautifully captures the hope and comfort available in Christ.

In the comfort of your love,
I pour out to you, my Savior,
the memories that haunt me,
the anxieties that perplex me,
the fears that stifle me,
the sickness that prevails upon me,
and the frustration of all the pain that weaves
about within me.

Lord, help me to see
your peace in my turmoil,
your compassion in my sorrow,
your forgiveness in my weakness,
and your love in my need.

Touch me, O Lord, with your
healing power and strength.⁵

5. Congregation of Alexian Brothers, "Prayer to Christ the Healer," accessed May 28, 2020, <http://alexianbrothers.ie/welcome>.

St. Francis of Assisi

This prayer for peace is attributed to St. Francis of Assisi. It is a beautiful expression of our desire to demonstrate the radical love of Christ to all around us, including our family, friends, and community members.

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace:

where there is hatred, let me sow love;

where there is injury, pardon; where there is doubt, faith;

where there is despair, hope;

where there is darkness, light;

where there is sadness, joy.

O divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek

to be consoled as to console,

to be understood as to understand,

to be loved as to love.

For it is in giving that we receive,

it is in pardoning that we are pardoned,

and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.

Amen.

It's Hard to See You Some Days, Jesus

The following prayer is drawn from The Catholic Youth Prayer Book—a resource for teens who want to learn more about prayer. In addition to offering prayers that speak to teens today, the book includes an overview of prayers from the Catholic tradition and methods for personal prayer.

To Jesus, the Good Shepherd:

Open my eyes,

that I might see your glorious light.

Open my mind,

that I may know your truth.

Open my heart,

that I might receive your healing touch.

And open my ears,

that I might hear you say,

“I love you.”

Amen.

6. It's Hard to See You Some Days, Jesus. The Catholic Youth Prayer Book, by Mary Shrader, et al., edited by Robert Feduccia Jr. (Winona,

MN: Saint Mary's Press, 2006). Copyright © 2006 by Saint Mary's Press. All rights reserved. Used with permission.

The Poor Clares in Galway

The Poor Clares in Galway, Ireland, open their book of prayer with the following poem. May these words remind you of the tender care exhibited by the Shepherd of your soul.

When my boat, Lord, is storm tossed and sinking,
When fears in my heart take control,
Say 'Be not afraid' to my spirit,
And Your answer will calm the soul.

When I flounder around in deep waters,
When the stresses of life take their toll,
A sudden deep hush steals upon me,
Your gentleness calms the soul.

When my life seems full of confusion
And I have lost sight of the goal,
As I stumble about in the darkness
May Your gentle light calm the soul.

I often live life on the surface,
Sometimes I'm playing a role,
Help me cherish my own inner beauty,
May Your tender love calm the soul.

When sinfulness tugs like an anchor,
When guilt has me caught in a hole,
I turn to You Lord for forgiveness,

And Your mercy calms the soul.
When I struggle with sickness and sorrow,
And eagerly long to be whole,
I call on Your name to bring healing
And the touch of Your hand calms the soul.

7. The Poor Clares, *Calm the Soul: A Book of Simple Wisdom and Prayer* (Galway: Hachette Books Ireland, 2012).