



Day 3 – Mental Health Ministry

Pray

St. John of God (15th century, Spain) is a patron saint for those who live with mental illness and face mental health challenges. In his mid-life, St. John was perceived, perhaps wrongly, as having a mental illness and was sent to a psychiatric facility where he experienced horrific treatment. In response to his experience there, he prayed that “those suffering from mental disorders might have refuge and that I may be able to serve them as I wish” (Francisco de Castro, *Historia*, 1585). St. John subsequently dedicated himself to ministering to the poor, sick, and people living with mental illness.



Lord, we pray that our brothers and sisters who suffer from mental illness and mental health challenges, and those who support them, are never alone or discriminated against, but instead are welcomed and supported in the Church.

We pray that mental health ministry becomes an integral ministry in the Church, and that every Catholic parish and community might have access to mental health ministries.

We pray that mental health ministries will help build communities of warmth and affection where those who face mental health challenges will, in the words of Pope Francis, [“find support and a light that opens them up to life.”](#)

St. John of God, pray for us.





Learn

Catholic mental health ministry educates and informs parishes, dioceses, and Catholic communities about the issues, struggles, and joys that can be found in the lives of people living with a mental illness. A mental health ministry provides [“vital spiritual accompaniment for people experiencing mental health challenges and mental illness, as well as those who care for them.”](#)

Mental health ministers do not themselves provide diagnosis, counseling, treatment, medical assistance, or behavioral health support, but instead may help people living with a mental illness find treatment and medical services in their community.

Mental health ministers [“work to eliminate the stigma and discrimination that people living with a mental illness encounter in the Church and in society.”](#)

Act

Consider starting or joining a mental health ministry in your parish, diocese, or Catholic community. Through a mental health Ministry you can be the heart, hands, and face of Jesus to people facing mental health challenges. The [Association of Catholic Mental Health Ministers](#) (CMHM) provides the education, training, and resources that allow volunteers, parish leaders, and clergy to confidently start or join a mental health ministry. CMHM also provides [worship and liturgy resources](#), including homily aids.