St. Dymphna Novena

With a reflection on the Pastoral Letter from the Bishops of California on Caring for those who Suffer from Mental Illness

HOPE

AND HEALING
For nine days

Let us reflect on “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, and to pray a novena for those touched by mental illness.

(May 15 is the Feast Day of St. Dymphna, Patron of those with mental illness.)
1. Christ calls us to attend to those who suffer from mental illness and provide hope and healing.

Those living with a mental illness should never bear these burdens alone, nor should their families who struggle heroically to assist their loved ones.

O God, we humbly beseech You through Your servant, St. Dymphna, who sealed with her blood the love she bore You, to grant relief to those who suffer from mental afflictions and nervous disorders, especially …

[Name the mentally afflicted person here.]

Saint Dymphna, helper of the mentally afflicted, pray for us.
Saint Dymphna, comforter of the despondent, pray for us.
Saint Dymphna, renowned for many miracles, please hear my plea.
Amen.
Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.
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Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.
Let us remember that there is always a way forward — there is always hope for every person — no matter how dire the circumstances may appear.

FROM THE BISHOPS OF CALIFORNIA

Day 4

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Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.
3. THOSE SUFFERING MENTAL ILLNESS SHOULD NOT BE STIGMATIZED OR JUDGED.

Mental illness is neither a moral failure nor a character defect. To suffer from a psychiatric disorder is not a sign of insufficient faith or weakness of will. Christian faith and religious practice do not immunize a person against mental illness. Indeed, men and women of strong moral character and heroic holiness – from Abraham Lincoln and Winston Churchill to St. Thérèse of Lisieux, St. Benedict Joseph Labre, St. Francis of Rome, and St. Josephine Bakhita – suffered from mental disorders or severe psychological wounds.

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Additional Resources

• The full text of the California Bishops’ Pastoral Letter on Hope and Healing for Mental Health and a corresponding study guide are provided by the California Catholic Conference

• The National Catholic Partnership on Disability presents key considerations in a pastoral response to persons with mental illness

• The Association of Catholic Mental Health Ministers (ACMHM) is a Lay Association of the Christian Faithful whose members are called to be a healing presence in the lives of people with mental illness