



# Memo

**Date:** April 25, 2022  
**To:** Priest, deacons, seminarians and bulletin editors  
**From:** Maggie Rousseau, director, Disabilities Ministry  
**Re:** May is Mental Health Awareness Month

---

May is Mental Health Awareness Month. One in five U.S. adults experiences mental illness, one in 25 U.S. adults experiences serious mental illness and 17 percent of youth experience a mental health disorder ([CDC and NIMH](#)). Parishes can address—and help to carry—the heavy cross of psychological disorders which exist in every community.

Additionally, the COVID-19 pandemic has had a major effect on our lives. Many of us are facing challenges that can be stressful, overwhelming and cause strong emotions in adults and children. Public health actions, such as social distancing, are necessary to reduce the spread of COVID-19, but they can make us feel isolated and lonely and can increase stress and anxiety. ([CDC](#)).

The Second Vatican Council states, “The joys and the hopes, the griefs and the anxieties of the men of this age, especially those who are poor or in any way afflicted, these are the joys and hopes, the griefs and anxieties of the followers of Christ.”

Please consider using the following Prayers of the Faithful throughout May (special thanks to the National Catholic Partnership on Disability (NCPD) for contributing to this resource):

---

For all persons who face discrimination and stigma due to mental illness, that they will find welcome and inclusion as branches of Jesus’ vine ... Let us pray to the Lord.

For all persons – who themselves or within their families live with mental and emotional crises, that the joy and love of Jesus may bring them comfort ... Let us pray to the Lord.

For all persons who live with mental health concerns, that the church and public agencies will act with justice to ensure the availability of necessary supportive services to aid in their recovery ... Let us pray to the Lord.

For all who provide services for persons whose lives are affected by mental illness – social workers, counselors, mental health professionals, pastoral caregivers – that they will bear witness to God’s spirit of love ... Let us pray to the Lord.

---

Additional resources:

National Catholic Partnership on disabilities: [Mental Illness | NCPD - National Catholic Partnership on Disability](#)

Compassion in Action, a guide from the US Department of Health and Human Services is available here: [compassion-in-action.pdf \(hhs.gov\)](#)

---

If you need additional resources or are interested in starting a parish Mental Health Ministry, please contact me at [mrousseau@archatl.com](mailto:mrousseau@archatl.com) or 404-920-7682.