



CATHOLIC CHARITIES 180TH ANNIVERSARY COUNSELING SERVICES PRAYER SERVICE

INTRODUCTION

Leader: In the 1960's, under the direction of Monsignor Thomas J. Reese, Catholic Charities extended its reach to care for the victims of poverty and social injustice and created a mental health and substance abuse counseling program. Today, Catholic Charities offers counseling to anyone for whom outpatient treatment is the right choice. Outpatient counseling is beneficial for persons who are depressed or have anxiety, individuals in recovery from substance abuse, couples going through stress in their relationship, families whose children are experiencing behavioral problems, and individuals who have a sudden change in their life.

The Catholic Church recognizes St. Dymphna, the Christian daughter of a 7th century pagan king, as the patron saint of the nervous and emotionally ill. She is venerated each year on May 15.

PRAYER TO ST. DYPHNA

ALL: You are celebrated, St. Dymphna, for your goodness to others. Both in your lifetime, and even more in the ages since, you have again and again demonstrated your concern for those who are mentally disturbed or emotionally troubled. Kindly secure some measure of your own serene love for those in need, and ask our Lord to give them a share in His life and boundless charity. Amen.

Leader: Now let us pray "A Mother's Prayer for Mental Illness," on behalf of our counseling clients and their families.

Reader 1: As I stumble from my bed this morning, help me to remember to be gentle and kind. My child's mind is shredding into a million pieces. He lives in a constant state of atrocious fear. I can see it in his eyes. Give him peace.

Reader 2: Guide me as I hold him in my arms. Help me to know what to say. What to do. Fill my heart with healing love, understanding, and empathy. Give me the strength of a thousand angels to hold back my tears. My heart is broken and a tidal wave of grief is overwhelming me with the need to cry. Give me the strength to bear it long enough to keep it from disturbing my child. Help me find someone I can safely bring it to.

Reader 3: Help me answer my family's questions with the same amount of compassion I would want for my self. Help me remember they are hurting too. My heart is not the only heart that is broken. We all need time and each other to heal.

Reader 4: As my journey becomes more and more isolative and lonely, remind me that the lack of involvement on the part of family and friends is not always because of the stigma and the ignorance. For many, it is because they are hurting too. They have the privilege of turning to their own lives. This is my family's life now. I must deal with it whether I am hurting or not.

Reader 5: Send me your best physicians and healers. Give me presence of mind, as I walk through the exhaustion of my grief to not settle for just any one no matter how tiresome the journey becomes. Help me adjust to the idea, that although it appears my son is gone, there will be no goodbye. And that he is still inside somewhere waiting for us to find him.

Reader 6: Infuse the creative part of my mind with solution-oriented thinking. Give me hope. Even if it is just a glimmer of hope. A mother can go for miles on just one tiny glimmer. Let me see just a flicker of the sparkle of joy in his eyes.

Reader 7: Guide my hands, calm my mind, as I fill out the multitude of forms for services. Then help me do it again, over and over. Provide me with the knowledge. Lead me to the books I need to read, the organizations I need to connect with. As you work through the people in my life, help me to recognize those that are here to help. Help me trust the right ones. Shine a light upon the right path.

Reader 8: Give me the courage to speak my truth, to know my son's truth. And to speak for him when he is unable to do it for himself. Show me when to do for him what he is not capable of doing for himself. Help me to recognize the difference.

Reader 9: Help me to stand tall in the face of the stigma; to battle the discrimination with the mighty sword of a spiritual warrior. And to deflect the sting of blame and faultfinding from the ignorant and the cruel.

Reader 10: Protect him from homelessness, loneliness, victimization, poverty, hunger, hopelessness, relapse, drugs, alcohol, suicide, cruelty and obscurity. Lead us to the miracles of better medications, better funding, better services, safe and plentiful housing, meaningful employment, communities who care, enlightenment. Help us to find some way to replace all the greed with humanitarian work and intrinsic reward again.

Reader 11: Most of all, give me the strength to deliver whatever I can to the work of unmasking this disease and revealing the beautiful person beneath. And when it is my time to leave my son behind, send a thousand angels to take my place.

- Anonymous, October, 2004

ALL: God of mercy, we bless You in the name of Your Son, Jesus Christ, who ministered to all who come to Him. Give Your strength to those bound by the chains of mental illness and addiction. Lord, look with compassion on all those who have lost their health and wrap them in Your loving arms. Restore to them the assurance of Your unfailing mercy, and strengthen them in the work of recovery. To those who care for them, grant patient understanding and a love that perseveres. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.