



Bulletin Notices

All human life is sacred. Every person created in God's image, reflecting the likeness of God is deserving of utmost respect and dignity even in the midst of episodes of illness. Nothing can diminish that dignity and worth, not mental illness or any condition. Each person is a significant contributor to the wholeness of the Body of Christ forming a community of faith that celebrates each other's joys and bears each other's burdens.

[*Welcomed and Valued: Building Faith Communities of Support and Hope with People with Mental Illness and Their Families*, National Catholic Partnership on Disability, 2009]

[T]he Church intends to bow down over those who suffer with special concern, calling the attention of public opinion to the problems connected with mental disturbance that now afflicts one-fifth of humanity and is a real social-health care emergency. I therefore encourage the efforts of those who strive to ensure that all mentally ill people are given access to necessary forms of care and treatment.

[*Message of His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI for the 14th World Day of the Sick*, December 2005]

Each of us, as individuals, citizens, relatives and neighbors, and certainly as believers in Christ's message, should sincerely reflect upon our own attitudes towards those who are afflicted by any form of mental illness and/or substance abuse disorders or other addiction. Rather than contributing to any sense of shame and stigma, we can, instead, work to erase it. We can reach out in compassion to help those so afflicted overcome these barriers, which hinder them in seeking their own well-being.

[Pope John Paul II "*Mentally Ill Are Also Made in God's Image*" 1996]

Serious mental illness can cause a crisis of faith for the person with mental illness and for the family. Why me/why our family? Is God punishing me/us? These and other questions can shake one's faith and be obstacles to recovery. A supportive faith community can help work through doubts and questions in a way that contributes to recovery and a restoration of faith.

[*Welcomed and Valued: Building Faith Communities of Support and Hope with People with Mental Illness and Their Families*, National Catholic Partnership on Disability, 2009]

One of the fundamental truths of Christian belief is that each human being is created in the image and likeness of God (Genesis 1:26-27). The Catholic Church unconditionally embraces and faithfully proclaims this truth. It is the foundation for human dignity. [*Affirming the Dignity of the Mentally Ill*, Nebraska Bishops' Conference, January 2005]

In our parishes are people who live daily with mental illness, at times not evident, and at other times experiencing episodes that disrupt every aspect of life, particularly relationships. Most basic in making a difference in the lives of parishioners with mental illness is a loving regard for the person that seeks to better understand the challenges of the illness, accompanying the person in whatever way possible to communicate that they are not alone on this journey through healing and recovery.

[*Welcomed and Valued: Building Faith Communities of Support and Hope with People with Mental Illness and Their Families*, National Catholic Partnership on Disability, 2009]

Every parish has members who experience a serious mental illness or who have a close friend or family member who lives with the condition. With this reality in mind, parishes must thoughtfully consider how they can more fully welcome people affected by mental illness into the life of the community in a way that values their gifts and contributions to the church family.

[*Welcomed and Valued: Building Faith Communities of Support and Hope with People with Mental Illness and Their Families*, National Catholic Partnership on Disability, 2009]

Whoever suffers from mental illness 'always' bears God's image and likeness in himself, as does every human being. In addition he 'always' has the inalienable right not only to be considered as an image of God and therefore as a person, but also to be treated as such.... The Church looks on these persons with special concern, as she looks on any other human being affected by illness."

[Pope John Paul II "*Mentally Ill Are Also Made in God's Image*" 1996]

It is everyone's duty to make an active response: our actions must show that mental illness does not create insurmountable distances, nor prevent relations of true Christian charity with those who are its victims. Indeed, it should inspire a particularly attentive attitude towards these people who are fully entitled to belong to the category of the poor to whom the kingdom of heaven belongs. (Mt. 5:3)

[Pope John Paul II "*Mentally Ill Are Also Made in God's Image*" 1996]

Our faith leads us to understand that [the mentally ill person's] suffering can be joined in God's plan to that of Jesus Christ, who, in His human nature, took all human suffering unto himself, whether suffering of body, mind or spirit. Yet, those suffering in this way, to reiterate the Holy Father's instruction, "always" bear God's image and likeness."

[*Affirming the Dignity of the Mentally Ill*, Nebraska Bishops' Conference, January 2005]