Seeking Jesus to Heal Anxiety

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Asking Jesus to share His life with us results in the gift of grace that heals our body, mind, and soul. Today anxiety is the most common mental health condition in the United States, affecting roughly 40 million people nationwide. In highly developed countries, medicine, healthcare, and religion have been compartmentalized, viewing treatment from a medicalized point of view. Fortunately, today there are medications and therapies available that help ameliorate the debilitating symptoms of anxiety. These can be very successful and should be supported whenever necessary.

Given the mindset of a 'biological' treatment model, many religions did not address the theological resources available for understanding and addressing the mental health concerns of their congregants. Today there has been a

significant shift in the positive role that faith plays in helping those suffering with mental disorders. Recent scientific studies support that healing and recovery aren't relegated only to physical and mental processes. Mental illnesses deeply affect the human soul since they impact and influence the 'whole' person—one's thoughts, feelings and behaviors. Living with anxiety disorders affects all aspects of family life and relationships, work and rest, prayer and one's relationship with God. In dealing with anxiety and other mental illnesses, we need to put healing in the broader context of physical, emotional and spiritual health.

With respect to anxiety, we have learned that religion in general, religious training, spirituality, faith, prayer, religious community and worship are associated with reduced anxiety. We know from the Bible that Jesus, the Divine

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Physician, healed the infirm. Each healing was a transformative process of repair and recovery in body, mind, and spirit. Jesus' healing resulted in the person experiencing a positive change, finding meaning, and moving toward self-realization of wholeness, regardless of the presence or absence of disease. Yes, Jesus certainly cured those with diseases, but foremost He was a physician of souls, attesting to His divine authority and inviting belief in Him. Jesus desires all of us—regardless of what illnesses we may have—to come to Him and develop a deeper relationship with God.

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We should always be asking, "How can we get closer to God in the midst of our mental suffering?" Presently, the Rochester Area Catholic Family of Parishes (St. Andrew, St. Irenaeus, and St. Mary of the Hills) has an active Mental Health Ministry that responds to those seeking help and wholeness through the combination of direct and spiritual support. We encourage and await all who suffer with anxiety or other mental disturbances to "come and see" (John 1:39) by encountering Jesus and experiencing His transformational power within our faith community.

Rochester Area Catholic Family of Parishes
Mental Health Ministry
Spiritual Support ♥ Awareness ♥ Education ♥ Resources

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