

Yes, even SAINTS have struggled with mental illness!

Mental illness has always been part of the human condition. And saints... have always been human. It stands to reason, therefore, that mental illness and mental health challenges do not disqualify someone from being holy, receiving God's grace, or being used as a vessel of God's love. Living with mental illness can offer a deep and profound insight into the suffering and mercy of God. It affords an opportunity to unite one's suffering with the Lord, depend deeply upon the Lord, and experience a closeness to Christ that many others (whose lives are without great struggle) may never realize. Mental illness is not a sign of spiritual weakness, and does not prevent anyone from becoming a saint. Here are just a few examples....

St. Therese of Lisieux—suffered from severe separation anxiety, depression, neurosis, hallucinations, delirium, hysteria, and scrupulosity (obsessive-compulsive disorder). She learned to adapt her need for security in relationships by leaning closer into relationship with Jesus.

St. Alphonsus Liguori—suffered from scrupulosity (a manifestation of OCD). He bore this cross of suffering, founded the Redemptorist order, and became a saint.

St. Alphonsa Muttathupadathu—her life was marked by suffering, but most especially the effects of a trauma disorder after witnessing a thief invading her room in the convent one night. She suffered the loss of memory, reading ability, and writing ability for over a year afterward. She learned to unite her suffering and limitations with Christ's suffering.

St. Jane Frances de Chantal—suffered from depression most of her life, which grew worse upon the accidental death of her husband. She learned to confront her depression with virtue, and was able to extend empathy and gentleness to those around her.


St. Francis de Sales—struggled with depression that was rooted in a feeling of hopelessness and lack of meaning in his own life. He devoted himself to God, and eventually found new meaning and answered the call to the priesthood.

St. Oscar Romero—suffered from obsessive-compulsive disorder. He sought long-term help from a psychiatrist, worked hard on spiritual resolutions, and methodically worked on developing virtues that were the opposite of the fear and rigidity he experienced. He continued to serve his community in El Salvador while trying to keep his mental health in balance... until the day he was martyred.

St. John of God—was committed to a mental hospital after beating himself publicly, pulling out his hair, and throwing himself in the mud. Despite harsh treatment and deficient care; in time John recovered, began to help other patients, and dedicated his life to serving the poor, sick and homeless, who often lived with a mental illness.

So, let's shrug off the stigma, support our brothers and sisters, unite our own suffering to the Lord's, persevere in spite of our challenges (whatever they may be) and seek God's kingdom first! Nothing is impossible with God!

Rochester Area Catholic Family of Parishes
Mental Health Ministry



Spiritual Support ♥ Awareness ♥ Education ♥ Resources

Our Rochester Area Catholic Family of Parishes (RAC FOP) **Mental Health Ministry** responds to mental health needs by providing spiritual support, awareness, education, and resources.



Save the Date—Mental Health Resource Help!

The National Alliance on Mental Illness started as a small group of families gathered around a kitchen table in 1979, and has blossomed into the nation's leading voice on mental health. Today, it is an alliance of more than 600 local Affiliates and 49 State Organizations who work in the community to raise awareness and provide support and education that was not previously available to those in need.



Sunday, February 26th, Leon Judd, President of NAMI Metro, will be sharing information about mental health services with our Family of Parishes. The presentation will take place at 1 pm in the St. Andrews Gathering Space. Stay tuned for more information!