



Pope's Worldwide Prayer Network

UNITED STATES | CANADA

APOSTLESHIP OF PRAYER

November 2025

-For the Prevention of Suicide -

Let us pray that those who are struggling with suicidal thoughts might find the support, care and love they need in their community, and be open to the beauty of life.

Pope's Prayer USA Video, popesprayerusa.net

Pope Video, thepopevideo.org

Reflection by Deacon Ed Shoener

Deacon Ed Shoener is the President of the International Association of Catholic Mental Health Ministers CatholicMHM.org

This month the Pope prays for the prevention of suicide. My daughter Katie lived with a serious mental illness called bipolar disorder for over 11 years, but she finally lost the battle to suicide at the age of 29. In her obituary, I wrote this:

"So often people who have a mental illness are known as their illness. People say that "she is bipolar" or "he is schizophrenic." Over the coming days as you talk to people about this, please do not use that phrase. People who have cancer are not cancer, those with diabetes are not diabetes. Katie was not bipolar – she had an illness called bipolar disorder – Katie herself was a beautiful child of God.

The way we talk about people and their illnesses affects the people themselves and how we treat the illness. In the case of mental illness there is so much fear, ignorance, and hurtful attitudes that the people who suffer from mental illness needlessly suffer further.

Our society does not provide the resources that are needed to adequately understand and treat mental illness. In Katie's case, she had the best medical care available, she always took the cocktail of medicines that she was prescribed, and she did her best to be healthy and manage this illness – and yet – that was not enough.

Someday a cure will be found, but until then, we need to support and be compassionate to those with mental illness, every bit as much as we support those who suffer from cancer, heart disease or any other illness. Please know that Katie was a sweet, wonderful person that loved life, the people around her – and Jesus Christ."

Amazingly Katie's obituary went viral and was seen by millions. It spoke to the hearts of people who live with mental illness or grieve the death of a loved one to suicide.

Since Katie's death I joined with others to establish the International Association of Catholic Mental Health Ministers (CMHM) to help parishes around the world offer mental health

ministries that provide spiritual accompaniment to people experiencing mental illness, including those who struggle with suicidal thoughts.

We pray that mental health ministry becomes an integral ministry in the Church that is available in every Catholic parish and community. We pray for the elimination of the stigma and discrimination that people living with a mental illness encounter.

[Leader] Daily offering prayer: Good Father, I know you are with me. Here I am on this new day. Place my heart once more next to the Heart of you Son Jesus, who is giving himself for me and who comes to me in the Eucharist. May your Holy Spirit make me his friend and apostle, available for his mission of compassion. I place in your hands my joys and hopes, my works and sufferings, everything that I am and have, in communion with my brothers and sisters of the Pope's Worldwide Prayer Network. With Mary, I offer you my day for the mission of the Church, and for the intentions of my Bishop, and the Pope for this month - Amen.

November: Let us pray that those who are struggling with suicidal thoughts might find the support, care and love they need in their community, and be open to the beauty of life.

Grace: We pray that the Lord may open our hearts to those struggling with suicidal thoughts around us, so that through His Sacred Heart, we might be able to provide the love and support that they need.

[Reader 1] Scripture: "Finally, all of you, have unity of spirit, sympathy, love for one another, a tender heart, and a humble mind" (1 Peter 3:8)

[Reader 2] Quote: "The first form of care needed in any illness is compassionate and loving closeness." (Pope Francis, 2024)

[Leader] Reflection questions:

1. When have you defined or described a person who is struggling with mental illness as their illness instead of who they are as a person and their dignity found in Christ?
2. In the upcoming week, what are some ways that you can support the people in your life who struggle finding hope? In what ways can you reveal the love of Christ to them:?
3. As a Church, what are some ways in which we can support those struggling with suicidal thoughts and provide the love and care that they need from their community?