

# *WALKING TOGETHER IN HOPE: A PASTORAL RESPONSE TO MENTAL HEALTH*

- Maricela Campa
- International Association of Catholic Mental Health Ministers



**HOPE AND**  
**HEALING**



# ***AGENDA***

- **Introduction**
- **Mental Health Literacy for Ministry**
- **Mental Health Ministry for Our Diocese and Parishes**
- **Resources for Mental Health Ministry**



# ***INTRODUCTION***

# The Washington Post

**She 'loved life:' A grieving father wrote openly about suicide and mental illness in daughter's obituary**

By Colby Hunsicker



Katie Shoener, pictured here at age 20. (Courtesy: Kelly Lunsford)

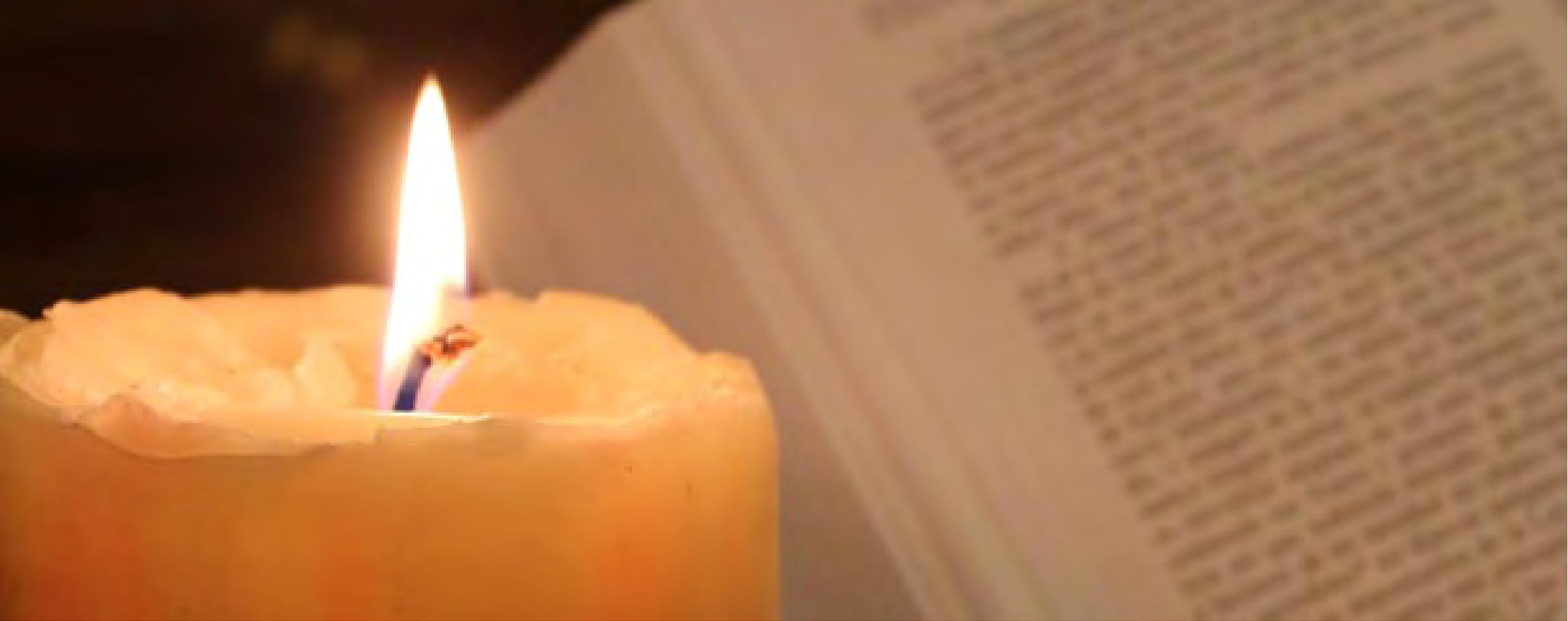
## **DEACON ED SHOENER**

- The deacon openly shares his story about losing his daughter Katie in August 2016. That prompts him to write his daughter's obituary and shared it online. He did not want there to be speculation or gossip about the reason for his daughter's death.
- As they shared the obituary, thousands of people wrote to him thanking him for being a voice for those who have died by suicide. People around the world shared their experiences.
- From that moment on, the deacon made an effort to raise awareness about mental health disorders, since his daughter lived with bipolarity. He clarified that living with a mental health disorder or even dying by suicide did not define his daughter—she is a beautiful creation of God.

# ***BISHOP JOHN DOLAN***

- Bishop John Dolan openly shares his story about losing three of his brothers and a brother-in-law to death by suicide.
- He advocates for those living with mental illness and reminds us that "we all have a place at the table," that we should not differentiate between those living with mental illness and that we should accompany families who have lost a loved one to death by suicide.
- He created the first Office of Mental Health Ministry in the Diocese of Phoenix with a focus on education, accompaniment, and advocacy.
- Co-author of two books, *When a Loved One Dies by Suicide* and *Responding to Suicide: A Pastoral Manual for Catholic Leaders*.





# *WHAT'S YOUR STORY?*

**ARE YOU WILLING TO SHARE YOUR STORY AND LET GOD  
USE IT FOR GOOD?**

# *CATHOLIC MENTAL HEALTH MINISTRY*

- **People Living with a Mental Illness**
- **Families and Friends**
- **Clergy and Ministers**
- **Fidelity to the Church**



International Association  
Catholic Mental  
Health Ministers



International Association  
Catholic Mental  
Health Ministers

BECOME A MEMBER

HOME

START A MINISTRY

RESOURCES

LEARNING

ABOUT



# A Healing Presence In Our Parishes

An International Ministry Working to Bring Mental Health Ministry  
to Every Catholic Parish and Community



## Consider Joining the Association of Catholic Mental Health Ministers

It is Free to Join! You will have access to monthly webinars, networking and mentorship, and access to free training from the University of San Diego.

Become a Member



International Association  
Catholic Mental  
Health Ministers

5,000+

MEMBERS IN OUR COMMUNITY

73+

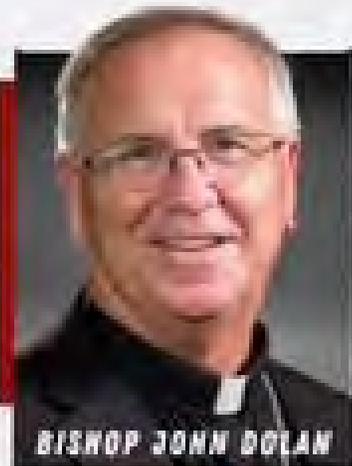
COUNTRIES REPRESENTED

1800+

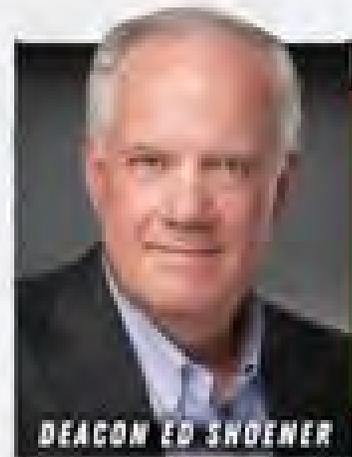
COURSES ENROLLED IN ON OUR  
LEARNING CENTER

10M+

USERS REACHED THROUGH DIGITAL  
CHANNELS



**BISHOP JOHN DOLAN**  
**CHAPLAIN**



**DEACON ED SHOENER**  
**PRESIDENT**



**JEN HOUSEL**  
**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**



**MARICELA CAMPA**  
**DIRECTOR - SPANISH  
COMMUNITIES ENGAGEMENT**



**DEACON TOM LAMBERT**  
**BOARD MEMBER**



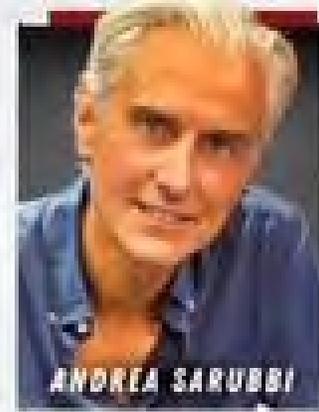
**EDWIN WALKER**  
**DIRECTOR -  
COMMUNICATIONS**



**DEACON ADAM MICHAELE**  
**BOARD MEMBER**



**FR. TIMOTHY DRAFF**  
**BOARD MEMBER**



**ANDREA SARUBBI**  
**DIRECTOR - OUTREACH**



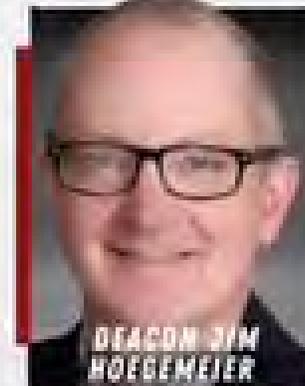
**MARGERY ARNOLD**  
**BOARD MEMBER**



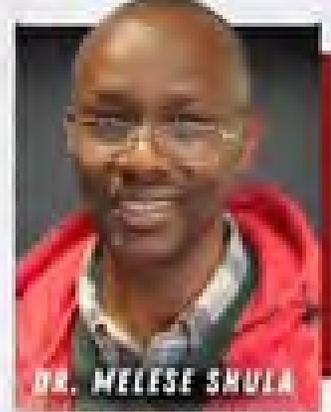
**BARBARA ZAHNER**  
**BOARD MEMBER**



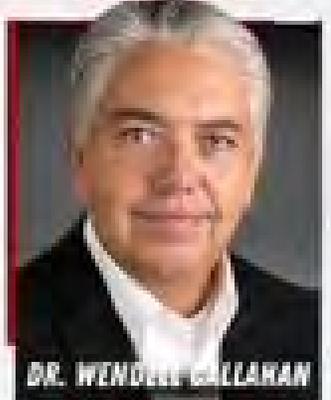
**DEACON JAMES FRIEND**  
**BOARD MEMBER**



**DEACON JIM  
HOEGEMEIER**  
**BOARD MEMBER**



**DR. MELESE SHULA**  
**DIRECTOR - AFRICAN  
ENGAGEMENT**



**DR. WENDELL CALLAHAN**  
**BOARD MEMBER**



**DR. VICTOR  
PEREIRA-SANCHEZ**  
**BOARD MEMBER**

WHEN I HEAR THE  
PHRASE MENTAL  
HEALTH, THE FIRST  
THING I THINK OR  
FEEL IS...

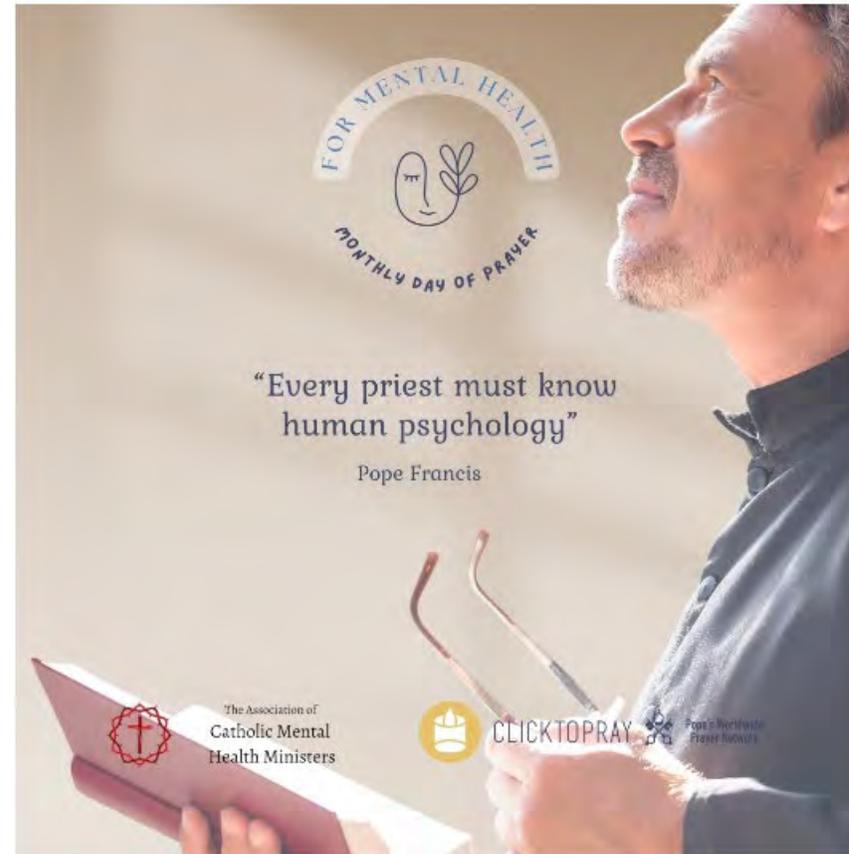


*DILEXIT NOS*

*MENTAL  
HEALTH  
LITERACY  
FOR  
MINISTRY*

We **invite** you to invest  
in your **formation**.

To form a successful  
Mental Health Ministry,  
it is important to have a  
strong foundation in  
**mental health literacy**  
and **suicide**  
**prevention**.





# ***FAITH AND REASON***

- Compatible - Leads to the truth.
- Medical science helps us to better understand the human person and to help others with this knowledge.
- *"Christ took upon Himself all human suffering, including mental illness. Whoever suffers from mental illness "always" carries within himself the image and likeness of God."* St. John



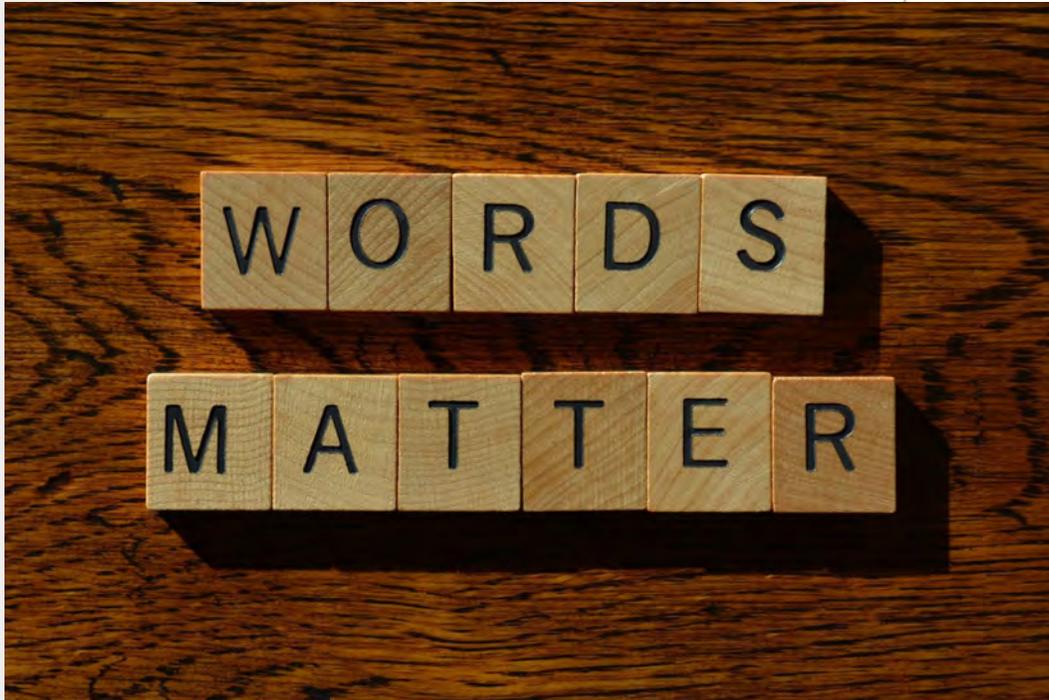
Nearly **1 in 5 U.S. adults** live with a mental illness.  
**You are not alone.**

**Learn how  
to get help.**



National Institute  
of Mental Health

[nimh.nih.gov/findhelp](https://nimh.nih.gov/findhelp)



- Say “Death by Suicide” or “Death from Suicide”
- Not Committed Suicide

PRIMEROS AUXILIOS DE SALUD MENTAL DE ADULTOS  
para las Comunidades Hispanohablantes

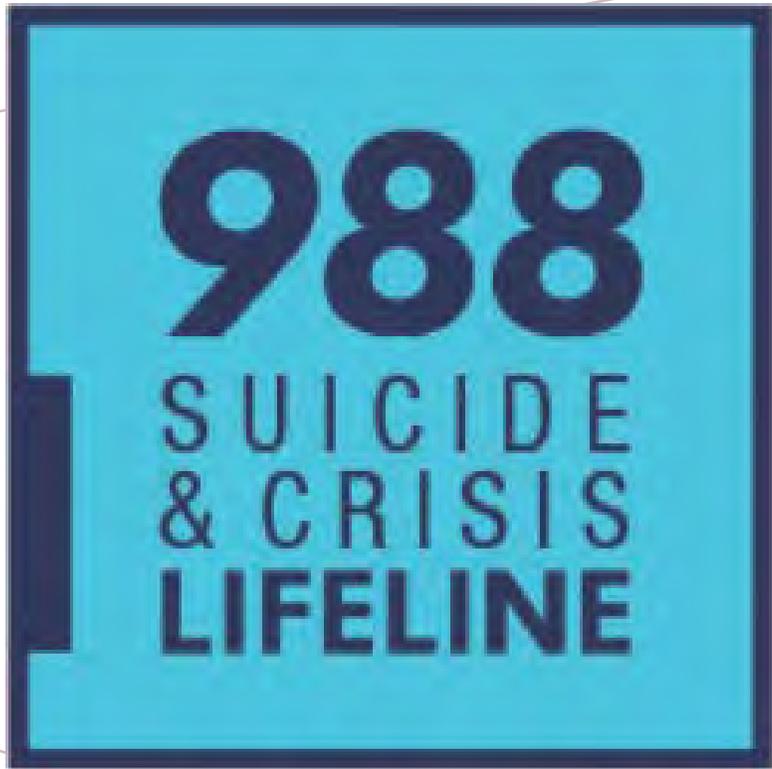


MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID USA



Mental Health **FIRST AID**  
from NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR MENTAL WELLBEING

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fV1CQaTTvzE>



*KNOW WHEN TO CALL*

*"I know of no other book even in the same league."  
Gerry Spence, Author of the NY Times Best-Seller *How to Argue and Win Every Time**

# I AM NOT SICK I Don't Need Help!

How to Help  
Someone with  
Mental Illness  
Accept  
Treatment

10th  
ANNIVERSARY  
EDITION

**Xavier Amador, Ph.D.**

# ANOSOGNOSIA

- To a person with anosognosia, this inaccurate perception feels just as real and compelling as other people's ability to perceive themselves.
- But these misperceptions cause conflict with others and increased anxiety. A lack of insight also often causes a person to avoid treatment.
- This makes it the most common reason people stop taking their medications. And, as it is often combined with psychosis or mania, a lack of insight can cause reckless or undesirable behavior.
  - NAMI
- LEAP approach:
  - Listen, Empathize, Agree, Partner

# *SEE*

- Share your experiences of mental health needs within your parish or school community. What are the challenges people are facing?



*HE LOVED US*

***MENTAL  
HEALTH  
MINISTRY FOR  
OUR PARISHES***



## **MENTAL HEALTH MINISTRY**

1. Accompaniment
2. Spiritual and social support
3. Faith-based to provide spiritual hope and healing



## **MENTAL HEALTH TREATMENT**

1. Diagnosis
2. Therapy and medication
3. Science-based to reduce symptoms and distress



***CHRIST CALLS US TO CARE FOR THOSE  
SUFFERING FROM MENTAL ILLNESS  
AND TO PROVIDE HOPE AND HEALING***

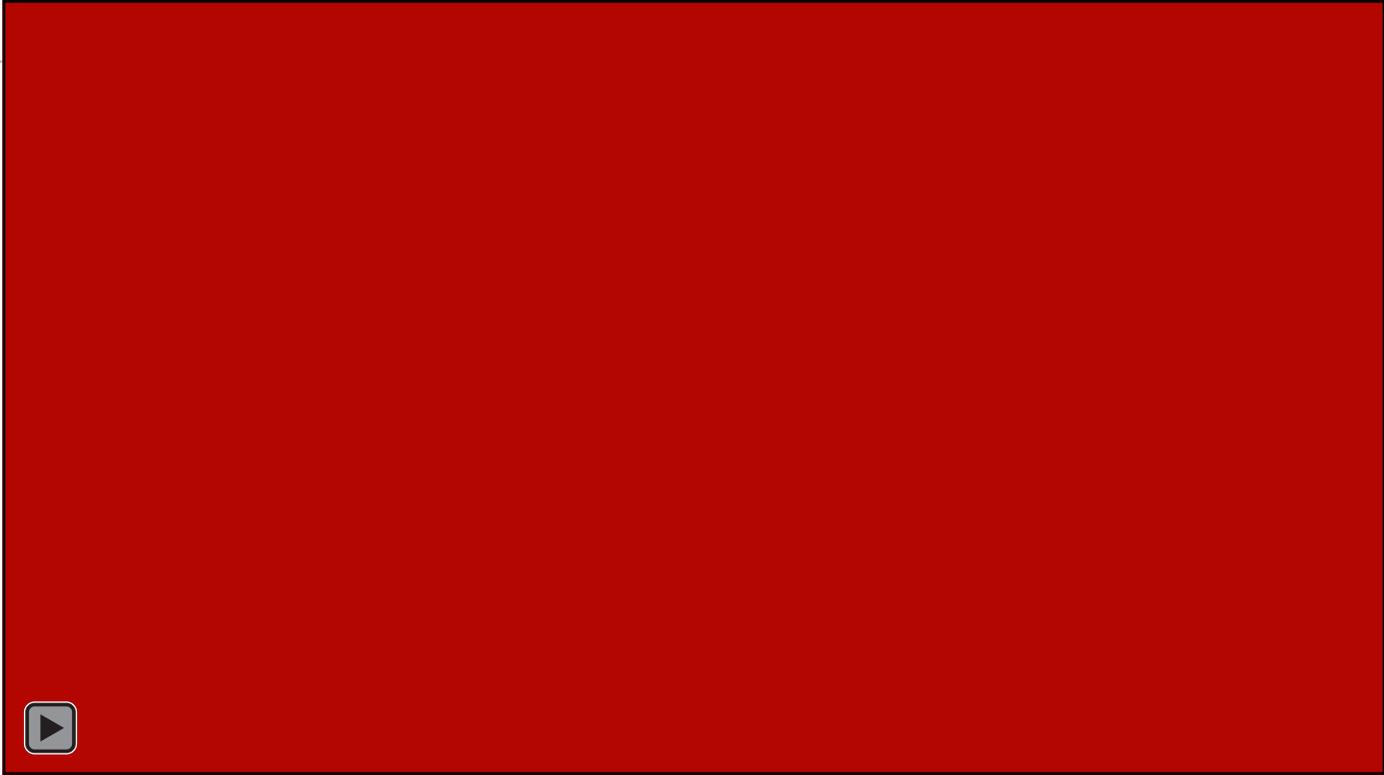
---

**THE CALL OF THE CHURCHES IS TO MEET  
THE MENTALLY ILL, TO LEARN TO LOVE THEM  
WITH THE LOVE AND PASSION OF JESUS AND  
TO OFFER THEM A PLACE OF BELONGING.**

---

**THE CHURCH'S MAIN TASK IS TO LOVE AND  
HEAL WITHOUT THE DEMAND FOR A CURE.  
TO SAY, "IT'S GOOD THAT YOU EXIST." <sup>1</sup>**

*<sup>1</sup>Principles of Catholic Theology by Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger (Pope  
Benedict XVI)*



*DIOCESE OF PHOENIX-MENTAL HEALTH MINISTRY*

***MENTAL HEALTH MINISTRY HELPS  
CLERGY ATTEND TO THEIR OWN  
MENTAL HEALTH***



---

Reduce self-stigmatization

---

Mental Health Literacy

---

Awareness of Resources

---

Self Awareness

---

Openness

---

Integration of Spiritual and  
Emotional Life

# *PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL*

- For people with mental illness and their families to find effective treatment for their illness and understanding and acceptance of others...
- For families struggling to understand and help their loved ones with mental illness, loving God, easing their burdens, calming their anxiety, and calming their fears...
- For people suffering from depression or burnout, who will find support and a light that opens them to life...
- We commend to his mercy and advocacy all who are contemplating suicide this day. Bring someone or something to intervene...



## Basics of a Robust Mental Health Ministry



---

**The Clergy is the Starting Point**

---

**Involve the Laity**

---

Mental Health Education Programs

---

Integrate into the Liturgy

---

Identify mental health resources in the community

---

Spiritual Support Groups

---

Home and Psychiatric Hospital visits

---

Grief Support, including Suicide Loss

---

Coordination with other ministries

---

# ***SOME BENEFITS OF INCORPORATING THE ACCOMPANIMENT MODEL IN YOUR CATHOLIC COMMUNITY***

- Catholic, Pro-Life and Promotes Evangelization
- Low financial cost
- No advanced formation required/accessible training for non-clinical laypeople
- Community and religious support pairs well with clinical care





NATIONAL  
CATHOLIC  
**mental  
health**  
CAMPAIGN

Novena for Mental Health

*OCTOBER 10 WORLD MENTAL HEALTH DAY*



CLICKTOPRAY



Pope's Worldwide  
Prayer Network



**NOVEMBER 2025 - For the prevention of suicide.**

Pray that those who struggle with suicidal thoughts will be able to find the support, care, and love they need in their community, and be open to the beauty of life.

**October 2026 – For Mental Health Ministry.** Let us pray that the mental health ministry be established throughout the Church, helping to overcome the stigma and discrimination of persons with mental

# *JUDGE*

**HOW WELL DOES YOUR PARISH/SCHOOL  
CURRENTLY ADDRESS THESE NEEDS? WHAT  
ARE THE STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES IN  
YOUR CURRENT APPROACH?**

# *RESOURCES FOR MENTAL HEALTH MINISTRY*

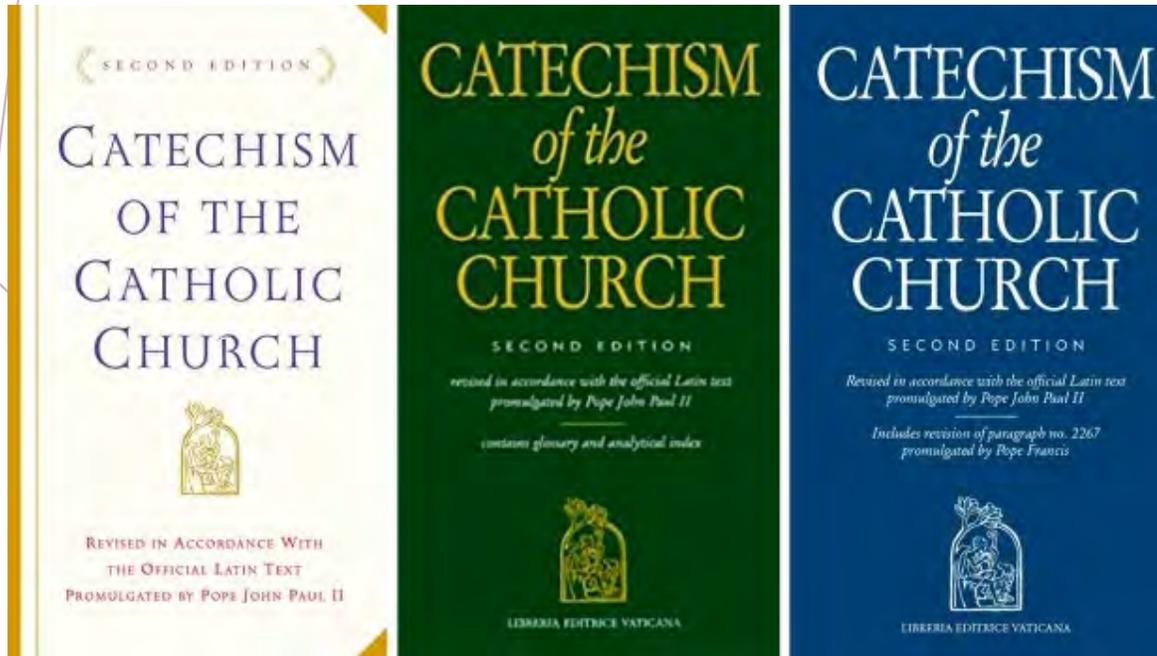
*NOS AMO*



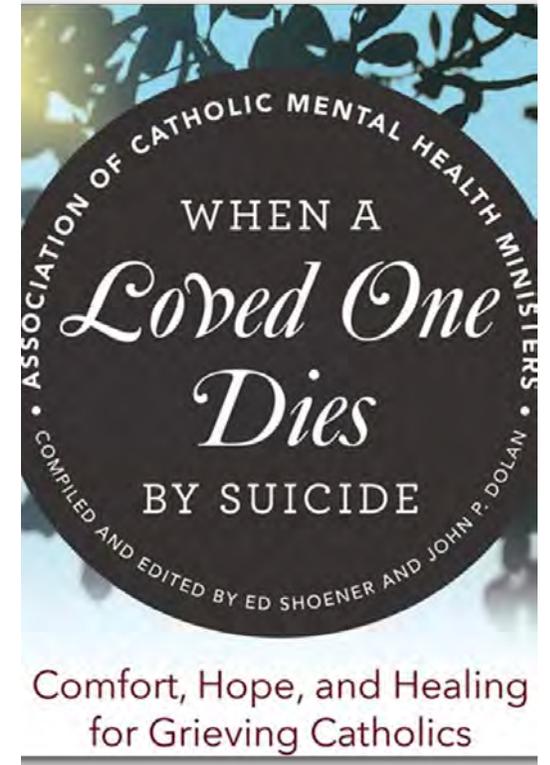
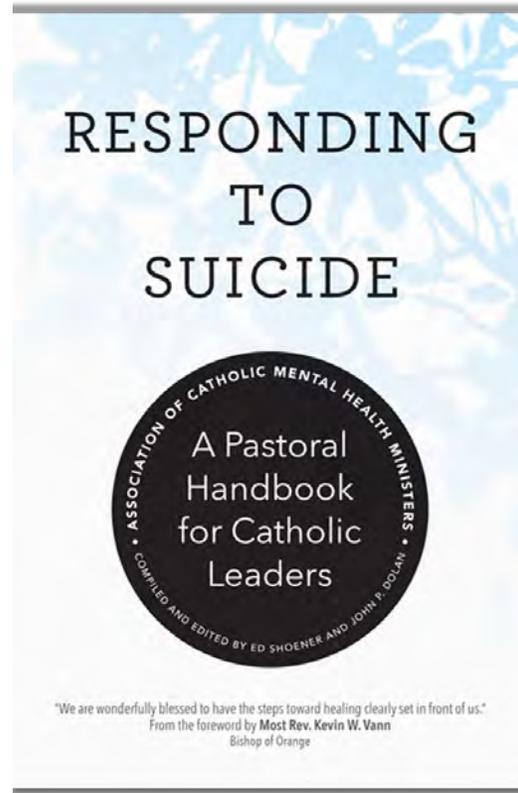
# *SPIRITUAL SUPPORT GROUPS*

- People living with a mental illness
- People who provide support: parents, friends and family
- Grief support, including suicide
- Other Support Groups

# SUICIDE



- The Catholic Church teaches (according to the Catechism) that suicide is a serious matter, but emphasizes God's mercy and his understanding of mental health issues.
- Recognize that psychological disorders and other factors can decrease the responsibility/guilt of the person who commits suicide.
- The Church encourages prayer for those who have committed suicide and their families, promoting support and compassion rather than condemnation. **2281-2283**

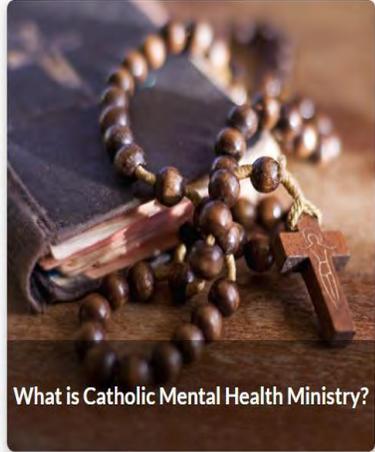


# A PASTORAL RESPONSE TO SUICIDE

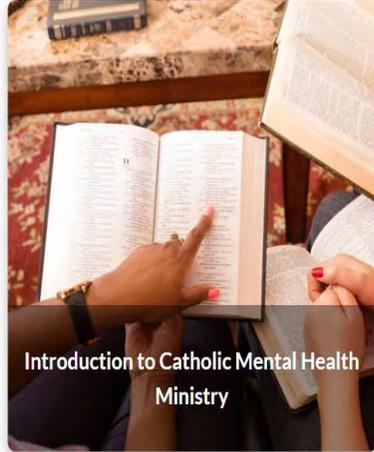


## *GUIDELINES FOR MENTAL HEALTH MINISTRY*

- Visit the [www.catholicmhm.org](http://www.catholicmhm.org) page to purchase a copy of the book or download a free PDF!
- A step-by-step guide on how to implement Mental Health Ministry in your parish or diocese.



What is Catholic Mental Health Ministry?



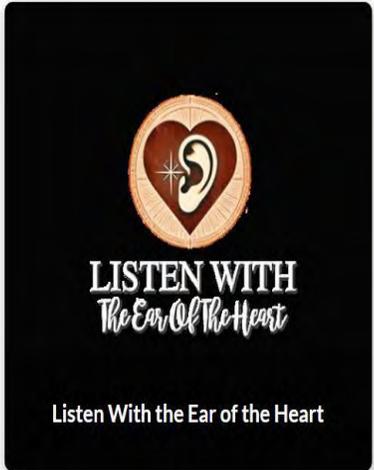
Introduction to Catholic Mental Health Ministry



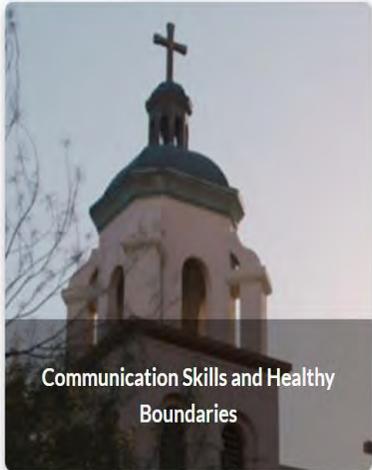
When a Loved One Dies by Suicide



Accompanying Those Who Mourn



Listen With the Ear of the Heart



Communication Skills and Healthy Boundaries

# Catholic Mental Health Ministry Learning Center

Pray. Study. Act

Join us to become an effective Catholic Mental Health Minister and Leader.

[Get Started](#)



International Association  
Catholic Mental  
Health Ministers

Coming soon! Catholic Mental Health Ministry: Literacy & Practical Skills

# RESOURCES IN MY COMMUNITY



Línea de crisis de salud mental disponible las 24 horas

Si está experimentando una crisis de salud mental, llame al (888) 881-4881 o al (916) 875-1055.

Servicio proporcionado por:

[Servicios de salud](#)

(888) 881-4881 o (916) 875-1055

## CALL 988



[Mobile Crisis Support Team](#)





**Catholic  
in Recovery**



THE **SANCTUARY** COURSE™  
FOR CATHOLICS



**CATHOLIC  
CHARITIES  
OF CALIFORNIA**



RADIO  
**SANTÍSIMO  
SACRAMENTO**



# *ACT*

**BRAINSTORM SOME CONCRETE IDEAS ON HOW YOUR  
PARISH/SCHOOL CAN BETTER SUPPORT THOSE  
FACING MENTAL HEALTH CHALLENGES.**

# ***A CALL TO ACTION***

Mental health ministers are called to be "pilgrims of hope."

Walking alongside those who suffer

Be a sign of God's mercy

Breaking the stigma surrounding mental illness and suicide

Promote holistic healing

Create welcome spaces



International Association  
Catholic Mental  
Health Ministers

# **CMHM International Conference**

June 4-6, 2026

Washington D.C., United States

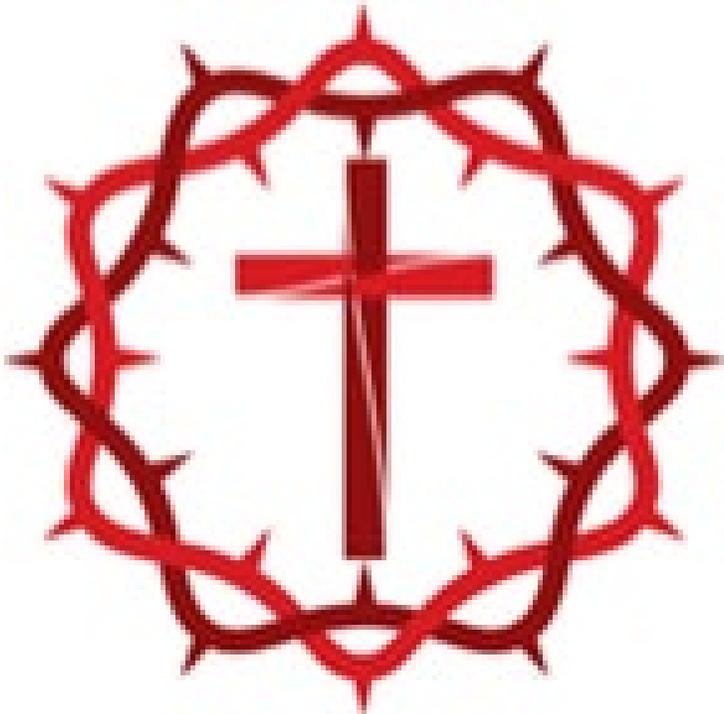
**Additional information coming soon....**

**SAVE  
THE DATE**

# *FOLLOW US ON*



[www.catholicmhm.org](http://www.catholicmhm.org)



## *THANK YOU*

- Maricela Campa
- Member of Board of Directors
- [maricelac@catholicmh.org](mailto:maricelac@catholicmh.org)
- [www.catholicmh.org](http://www.catholicmh.org)