

Sustaining Heart when dealing with depression, anxiety or stress

Objective: Mental health affects everyone. Too many times proper care does not come for the sufferer or loved ones. Acceptance that mental illness is real and treatable is the first step. Mental illness is not what our media implies; the vast majority of sufferers live without anyone being able to tell that they live in pain. What do we need to know about mental health from our Catholic heritage?

Song Suggestion: Be Not Afraid (Blue 54, Red 596, Gather 263)

Bible and Catechism Readings:

Eph 6: 10-11, 18

Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. Pray at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication.

Revelation 21:4

He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away."

John 16:33

I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world.

I waited patiently for the Lord; he turned to me and heard my cry. He lifted me out of the slimy pit, out of the mud and mire; he set my feet on a rock and gave me a firm place to stand. He put a new song in my mouth, a hymn of praise to our God. Many will see and fear the Lord and put their trust in him.

Psalms 40:1-3

Surely, I wait for the LORD;
who bends down to me and hears my cry,
Draws me up from the pit of destruction,
out of the muddy clay,
Sets my feet upon rock,
steadies my steps,

Jeremiah 29:11

For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.

Catechism 2292

Scientific, medical, or psychological experiments on human individuals or groups can contribute to healing the sick and the advancement of public health.

Catechism 2293

Basic scientific research, as well as applied research, is a significant expression of man's dominion over creation. Science and technology are precious resources when placed at the service of man and promote his integral development for the benefit of all. By themselves however they cannot disclose the meaning of existence and of human progress. Science and technology are ordered to man, from whom they take their origin and development; hence they find in the person and in his moral values both evidence of their purpose and awareness of their limits.

Catechism 2294

It is an illusion to claim moral neutrality in scientific research and its applications. On the other hand, guiding principles cannot be inferred from simple technical efficiency, or from the usefulness accruing to some at the expense of others or, even worse, from prevailing ideologies. Science and technology by their very nature require unconditional respect for fundamental moral criteria. They must be at the service of the human person, of his inalienable rights, of his true and integral good, in conformity with the plan and the will of God.

Vignette:

These are tough times for sure given the Pandemic we've just come out of & now there are inflationary issues to contend with adding even more stress to our daily lives. How many of us are guilty of greeting a friend with a simple "How ya doing?" but then not really reading the Tea Leaves to pause & really LISTEN to what they are saying. Their answer might be as simple as "I'm fine" or "I'm ok." As Christian Men, we are called by Jesus to "Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another." A simple follow up to their response can be: "I'm here if you ever want to get together to just talk....maybe grab a cup of coffee." You've probably heard it said a thousand times that each of us never really knows what another person might be going thru be it Depression or other Life stresses. That one little extra response of making yourself available to that person could be a game changer. Over time I think you'll find by hitting the pause button in some of our daily interactions with others we can acquire the listening skills to profoundly become true Disciples of Christ. Give a try you might surprise yourself & uncover a talent you have for helping others navigate thru some tough times.

Questions for Large and Small Group Discussion:

Have you ever felt completely overwhelmed? What was the cause?

Is mental illness real or pure weakness and laziness? Why?

Why do think mental illness is such a taboo?

Is mental illness wide spread or sporadic?

What is the best method of treatment?

What can you do to help someone who suffers?

What do you know about the Church's teaching on mental illness?

If God made us with mental illness, is the WHO we are?

Action Plan:

Look around at all the people in your life, at work, and church, and even in your family. Do you see people who put up a good front but you always felt like there was something not right? Have you looked in their eyes and seen emptiness? Do they look lonely even in a crowd? These are people who potentially are suffering from depression or some other mental illness. Could you take some time and ask questions? Sometimes this is all that is needed.

References:

Catholics and Depression

A new book co-authored by a psychiatrist and a priest offers faithful wisdom and learned guidance in dealing with depression and anxiety.

- I'm a Pastor, but Faith Didn't Stop Me From Attempting Suicide
<https://themighty.com/2016/09/im-a-pastor-who-attempted-suicide/>
- Why The Church Should Not Overlook Depression
<https://themighty.com/2017/05/christian-church-depression-cant-ignore/>
- 10 'Harmless' Pieces of Advice Anxious Christians Are Tired of Hearing
<https://themighty.com/2018/04/hurtful-things-christians-say-about-anxiety-mental-illness/>

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