

Mental Illness Awareness Week Prayer Service

Simplicity and Strength

October 4, 2016



We gather on this Day of Prayer for Recovery and Hope, which is also the Feast of St. Francis of Assisi. We look to St. Francis's gift of simplicity to help us discover God's love and strength. Francis's love of nature leads us to discover the simplicity of a tree, so often taken for granted, yet always there as a reminder of the sturdy strength of God's love.

Any thoughts shared or prayers offered are gifts to the community, not to be discussed, commented on, or shared.

Song: "Peace Is Flowing Like a River"

Introduction: Thank you for joining us in prayer. We gather to pray for those whose lives are affected by mental illness: family, friends, care and providers, people in recovery, people who struggle with mental illness day to day. Together we ask for the grace of God to draw us closer to him, and to one another. We keep in mind the words of Pope Francis: "In the face of life's difficulties, let us ask the Lord for the strength to remain joyful witnesses to our faith....To be friends with God means to pray with simplicity."

Opening Prayer: Psalm 92:13-15 [<http://www.usccb.org/bible/psalms/92>]

The just shall flourish like the palm tree,
shall grow like a cedar of Lebanon.
Planted in the house of the Lord
they shall flourish in the courts of our God.
They shall bear fruit even in old age,
they will stay fresh and green.

Scripture Reading: Jeremiah 17:7-8 [<http://www.usccb.org/bible/jeremiah/17>]

Blessed are those who trust in the LORD;
the LORD will be their trust.
They are like a tree planted beside the waters
that stretches out its roots to the stream:
it does not fear heat when it comes, its leaves stay green;
in the year of drought it shows no distress,
but still produces fruit.

Reflection: *The simple tree reminds us of the sturdy strength that allows us to go through the ups and downs of our lives. We are called to pause a moment to be aware of God's strength, and to give ourselves a moment of peace, another message from St. Francis.*

Where do you find strength, or peace, or both?

(A period of quiet meditation, followed if desired by an invitation for individuals to respond to the question. This should be done in an atmosphere of respect, so that each person should have a minute or so to speak, and that what is shared is to be treated as a gift to the group, without comment or discussion.)

(Allow ample time.)

Summary: The strength and peace of which we have spoken, or thought about, has its source in Jesus. He calls us to depend on him and to stay connected with him. He is the One whose grace keeps us steady and grounded. He is the One through whom we find peace. He is the One who helps us share peace with each other. We can be strong and sturdy in the simple peace of His love.

Scripture: John 15:1-8

Intercessions: *Bringing together all our needs and concerns, let us pray:*

Response: "Lord, hear our prayer"

For our Holy Father, Pope Francis, that by his simple example, he will lead the Church in ways that allow all to find God's strength, especially those who struggle with mental illness, let us pray to the Lord.

For leaders of nations around the world, that they provide adequate and respectful care for their people in need of treatment, support, and recovery, let us pray to the Lord.

For our bishops, priests, deacons, and lay ministers entrusted with pastoral care for those affected by mental illness, that they may be a source of strength and peace, let us pray to the Lord.

For families, friends, the medical community and service providers, that God will provide them with his blessings and graces each day, let us pray to the Lord.

For each person who has a diagnosis of mental illness, that he or she may find strength and discover peace in God's loving concern each and every day, let us pray to the Lord.

That we here may draw on God's grace and be strength and peace for each other, let us pray to the Lord.

And for those concerns we hold in the silence of our hearts ... Lord hear our prayer [*or invitation may be given for intercessions to be prayed aloud*]

And now let us we join together in the prayer our Lord Jesus taught us ...

The Our Father

Closing Prayer: Prayer of St. Francis [<http://www.loyolapress.com/our-catholic-faith/prayer/traditional-catholic-prayers/saints-prayers/peace-prayer-of-saint-francis>]

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace:
where there is hatred, let me sow love;
where there is injury, pardon;
where there is doubt, faith;
where there is despair, hope;
where there is darkness, light;
where there is sadness, joy.

O divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek
to be consoled as to console,
to be understood as to understand,
to be loved as to love.
For it is in giving that we receive,
it is in pardoning that we are pardoned,
and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.
Amen.

Blessing and Dismissal:

Closing Song: "We Shall Not Be Moved"