

MINISTERING TO WORSHIPPERS WITH MENTAL ILLNESS

FACTS ABOUT MENTAL ILLNESS

- Mental illnesses, such as schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, depressive disorders, anxiety disorders and personality disorders are physical brain disorders that profoundly disrupt a person's ability to think, feel, and relate to others and their environment.
- Mental illnesses are more common than cancer, diabetes, or heart disease.
- In any given year, more than five million Americans experience an acute episode of mental illness.
- One in every five families is affected in their lifetime by a severe mental illness, such as bipolar disorder, schizophrenia, major depression, and others.
- One in ten children and adolescents have mental illnesses severe enough to cause some level of impairment. Yet fewer than one in five of these young people receive needed treatment.

Contributed by Deacon Tom Lambert, Archdiocese of Chicago Commission on Mental Illness

WHAT CAN CONGREGATIONS DO TO REACH OUT?

- Educate clergy and staff about mental illness and mood disorders.
- Run informative bulletin articles about mental illness and list community resources for help in your area.
- Host a support group for parishioners with mental illness and their families.
- Have a special liturgy for the intentions of parishioners with mental illness and their families.
- Provide brochures on mental illness in church.
- Help stamp out stigma by preaching and talking about mental illness and including intentions for those with mental illness in the Prayers of the Faithful.

Adapted from 5 Ways Churches Can Minister to Those with Mental Illness by Therese Borchard