

Mental Health...

Part 2 A Mother's Prayer for Mental Illness

“And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints in accordance with God’s will.” Romans 8:27

The onset of mental illness usually occurs during the 18 to 25 year period. There may not be any appreciable cause. This is distressing for parents and family members of the person with the illness. Recently parents of those suffering from mental illness have banded together for a National Day of Prayer for Mental Illness. One of the contributors told of her struggles with prayer which she was anxious to share with any and all. She said that much of the struggle came from not knowing what to pray for. She found herself a pioneer in the unknown land of schizophrenia.

As reported on the www.schizophrenia.com website: “I want to share a prayer I have written for all the parents who find themselves... (with) an enormous amount of pain and suffering.... For too often, my greatest fear was I had not only lost my son, but also I had lost my relationship with God.

A Mother's Prayer for Mental Illness

O God, as I stumble from my bed this morning, help me to remember to be gentle and kind. My child's mind is clouded and unordered. He lives in a constant state of anxiety. I can see it in his eyes. Give him peace.

Guide me as I interact with him day by day. Help me to know what to say. What to do. Fill my heart with healing love, understanding, and empathy.

Give me the strength of a thousand angels to hold back my tears. My heart is broken and a tidal wave of grief is overwhelming me with the need to cry. Give me the strength to bear it long enough to keep it from disturbing my child. Help me find someone I can safely bring it to.

Help me to answer my family's question with the same amount of compassion I want for myself. Help me to remember they are hurting too. This is an unwelcome assault on an entire family.

As my journey becomes more and more lonely, remind me that the lack of involvement on the part of family and friends is not always because of the stigma and the ignorance. For many, it is because they are hurting too. They have the privilege of turning to their own lives. This is my family's life now. I must deal with it whether I am hurting or not.

Send me your best physicians and healers. Give me presence of mind, as I walk through the exhaustion of my grief to not settle for just any one person no matter how tiresome the journey becomes.

Help me adjust to the idea, that although it appears my son is gone, there will be no goodbye. And that he is still inside somewhere waiting for us to find him.

Infuse the creative part of my mind with solution oriented thinking. Give me hope. Even if it is just a glimmer of hope. A

mother can go for miles on just one tiny glimmer. Let me see just a flicker of the sparkle of joy in his eyes.

Guide my hands, calm my mind, as I fill out the multitude of forms for services. Then help me do it again over and over.

Provide me with the knowledge. Lead me to the books I need to read, the organizations I need to connect with. As you work though the people in my life, help me to recognize those that are here to help.

Give me the courage to speak my truth; to know my son's truth. And to speak for him when he is unable to do it for himself. Show me when to do for him what he is not capable of doing for himself. Help me to recognize the difference.

Help me to stand tall in the face of the stigma; to battle the discrimination with the mighty sword of a spiritual warrior. And to deflect the sting of blame and fault finding from the ignorant and the cruel.

Protect him from homelessness, loneliness, victimization, poverty, hunger, hopelessness, relapse, drugs, alcohol, suicide, cruelty and obscurity.

Lead us to the miracles of better medications, better funding, better services, safe and plentiful housing, meaningful employment, communities who care, enlightenment.

Most of all, give me the strength to deliver whatever I can to the work of unmasking the man made ugly by this disease and revealing the human and all of it's suffering beneath.

Finally, when it is my time to leave my son behind, send a thousand angels to take my place.

In the name of the compassionate Jesus, AMEN.”

Roger Cann

member of CABC working group on mental health

Rev. Jennifer Smart, chair of Dr. Lois Mitchell's working group on mental health, writes: “This issue is very important. One in five Canadians is affected by mental illness in his or her lifetime! (Canadian Mental Health Association www.cmha.ca) Our Working Group is seeking to address the problem of stigma with mental illness. A year ago, Senator Michael Kirby and his Standing Committee published a report, “Out of the Shadows at Last: Transforming Mental Health, Mental Illness and Addictions Services in Canada”. The report interviewed many, many groups across Canada, including universities, prisons, aboriginal groups, psychiatric departments of hospitals. However, Christian input was seriously lacking. The first two chapters focus on the personal experiences of the mentally ill and the experiences of the family members/caregivers. The passion in this report reflects a great need to improve the quality of mental health care delivery in Canada. In the meantime, the church should not sit on the sidelines with apparent ignorance and/or indifference!”