



Day 8 – Suicide Awareness

Pray

Servant of God Dorothy Day (1897-1980, United States) had deep empathy for those who struggle with suicidal thoughts and those who grieve the suicide death of a loved one. She attempted suicide twice as a young woman. In her prayer book, she kept a special list of people who had died by suicide.



Ever loving God, we commend to your mercy all who are contemplating suicide this day. Bring someone or something to intervene.

We pray for our community leaders and officials to come to an understanding of the need for laws, policies, and funding for effective mental health care and suicide prevention programs.

We pray for all who have died by suicide. May Mother Mary carry them into the loving arms of her son Jesus, asking him to grant them complete joy, without the pain of heart and mind that led to suicide.

Servant of God Dorothy Day, pray for us.





Learn

According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC), the number of [recorded suicides reached an all-time high in 2022](#), at 49,449 deaths by suicide.

There remain unfortunate but common misperceptions of the beliefs of the Catholic Church with respect to people who tragically take their own lives. In truth, developments in the behavioral sciences as well as the Church's own experience in pastoral outreach to families affected by suicide have assisted the Church in following the guidance of the Holy Spirit to a more mature and complete understanding of suicide.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church reaffirms this deeper understanding of suicide in acknowledging that “[g]rave psychological disturbances, anguish, or grave fear of hardship, suffering, or torture can diminish the responsibility of the one committing suicide” (Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC), 2282).

Suicide is always considered a grave matter and the Catechism states “We are stewards, not owners, of the life God has entrusted to us. It is not ours to dispose of” (CCC, 2280). However, we “should not despair of the eternal salvation of persons who have taken their own lives.

By ways known to him alone, God can provide the opportunity for salutary repentance. The Church prays for persons who have taken their own lives” (CCC, 2283).

Act

If you or a loved one is in crisis, reach out for help. The National Suicide and Crisis Hotline can be reached, by call or text, at the three-digit phone number “988.” The Hotline provides free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week in the United States.

You can help prevent suicide by learning the warning signs of suicide and understanding how you can encourage people to find the care they need when they are suicidal. Take the time to take a suicide prevention course in your community, or explore the suicide prevention resources available [here](#).

Watch *When a Loved One Dies by Suicide*, a series of eight films featuring stories of Catholics whose loved ones have died by suicide. It is designed to help individuals who are grieving and for use in grief support groups. The film series and other resources can be found on the [Association of Catholic Mental Health Ministers website](#).