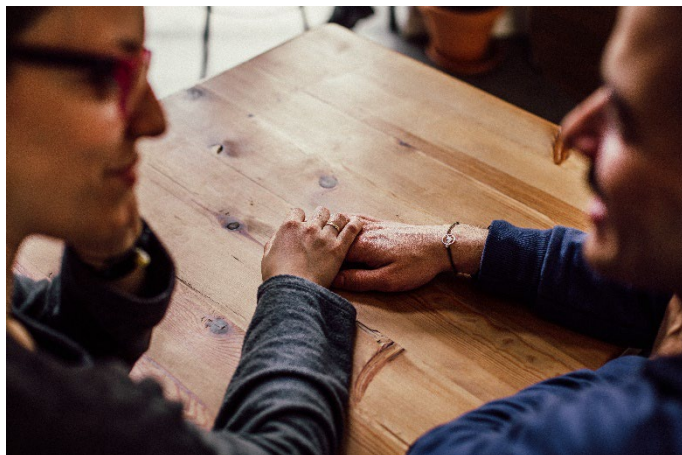




## Day 2 – Families

### *Pray*

The Holy Family reveals to us the beauty and intimacy of family life: “May Nazareth remind us what the family is, what the communion of love is, its stark and simple beauty, its sacred and inviolable character” (Paul VI, *Address at Nazareth*, Jan. 5, 1964). Pope Francis reminds us that the intimacy of family life includes accompanying each other through suffering: “In the Gospel, we see that even in the Holy Family things did not all go well: there were unexpected problems, anxiety, suffering. . . . Every day, families have to learn to listen and understand one another, to walk together, to face conflicts and difficulties” (Pope Francis, *Angelus*, Dec. 26, 2021). The Holy Family’s life on earth gives us a model of love in the midst of suffering, and they stand ready in Heaven to intercede on our behalf.



*Lord Jesus, may our families draw ever closer to you and to one another. We lift up all families, particularly those with members facing mental health challenges. May family members help remove the stigma surrounding mental health challenges, both within their families and in their communities. Comfort, hold, lead to safety, and heal families affected by every form of trauma, mental health challenge, and mental illness. You know every family’s specific situation, wounds and needs, and you can restore and make all things new. Lord, pour your grace into their hearts, minds, souls, and bodies, filling them with light and peace amid their suffering. Help all families, unite their suffering to your Passion and Death, mindful of the resurrection to new life to come. Amen.*

*Holy Family, pray for us.*





## **Learn**

Healthy and loving families can help ensure that persons with mental health challenges receive the support they need. Research indicates that [healthy family relationships are associated with positive mental health outcomes](#). Through listening to one another—especially our youth—families can love and support each other during times of poor mental health or mental illness, including by reaching out to the larger community for professional mental health treatment.

Families face many challenges today, and trauma can come in many forms. When one family member suffers, all suffer. Families face “financial instability, unemployment, sickness, and medical issues; immigration challenges and family separation; and other societal ills that afflict families today: racism, ageism, misogyny, human trafficking, and medical/reproductive technologies that objectify and demean the dignity of life, sexuality, and the human person” ([Called to the Joy of Love: National Pastoral Framework for Marriage and Family Life Ministry](#)).

Caring for one another through these challenges takes many forms, including caring for one another’s mental health. Families should strive to remove the stigma surrounding mental health within their own homes so that family members can feel safe sharing their struggles and seeking community and professional support. In response to all of the challenges families

face, we turn to Christ, who himself experienced the intimate family bond with Holy Mary and St. Joseph. He offers all a path of hope and healing.

We also particularly acknowledge the deep pain and suffering of clerical abuse survivors and their families, and we humbly lift up all survivors and their families to our Lord. USCCB Resources, including the *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People*, can be found [here](#).

## **Act**

It is helpful to recognize that all families experience suffering, trauma, and mental health issues of various types, and that they do not have to suffer alone. Assistance is available from mental health professionals through therapy, counseling, coaching, or spiritual direction. [Called to the Joy of Love: National Pastoral Framework for Marriage and Family Life Ministry](#) provides guidance to dioceses and ministries on many issues, including marriages in crisis and families in difficult situations in every stage of life. To help yourself, an individual, or a family in need, explore community-based services such as your local Catholic Charities; reach out to your local diocesan offices, family ministry or Catholic health care provider; or seek out a reputable Catholic therapist in your area.