



Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

On this World Mental Health Day, I am reminded of the prevalence and particular suffering experienced by those with mental health challenges. Burdens of the mind are often unseen, misunderstood, and too frequently met with silence.

Mental health struggles can show in quiet ways: a parishioner withdrawing from community, a friend burdened with sadness, a child living with anxiety, a senior feeling lonely.

Emotional wounds are just as real and painful as physical ones, yet shame often prevents people from seeking help within their faith community. Depression, anxiety, trauma, and other mental burdens—diagnosed or not—are not signs of moral failure or punishments from God.

Mental health is a reality that affects us all, albeit in different ways. These challenges are a common part of the human experience and should be met with understanding, compassion, and hope.

Scripture reminds us that Christ himself was “a man of sorrows, acquainted with grief” (Isaiah 53:3). He embraced our full humanity, sharing in our suffering and offering a love that can heal the deepest wounds of the heart. Jesus listened, he wept, he healed, and he continues to call us to do the same.

The Church has a significant role in reducing the stigma and isolation that are often associated with mental health issues. Too many people suffer alone, fearing judgment or misunderstanding. We must speak openly and honestly about these struggles, reassuring each other that there is no shame in seeking help.

Our Catholic parishes are meant to be places of refuge where all are welcome and the weary find rest. We should strive to foster a community where vulnerability is tenderly received, and suffering is met with compassion. Accompanying God’s people in their whole human experience is inherent to our mission as a Church.

In these early stages of Mental Health Ministry in the Archdiocese of Vancouver, I ask for your prayers, that the Holy Spirit may guide our efforts. May we hold firm to the words of our Lord “Come to me, all you who labour and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest.” (Matthew 11:28)

For those who are currently carrying the weight of mental health struggles— you are not alone. The Lord walks with you and the Church

stands beside you. There is hope. There is healing. There is enough grace for every sorrow.

May Our Lady, Mother of Hope, be with us on our journey, and may God bless you, strengthen you, and grant peace to every heart.

Yours sincerely in Christ,



A handwritten signature in cursive script, which appears to read "Richard W. Smith". The ink is black and the signature is fluid and elegant.

✠ Richard W. Smith
Archbishop of Vancouver