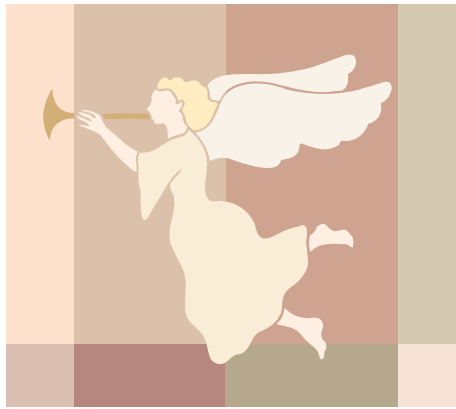
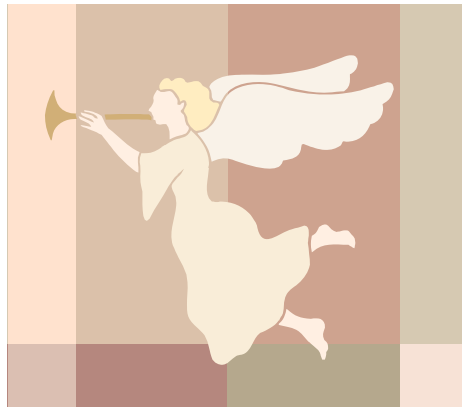


# Angel of Love



Prayers  
for the  
Mentally Ill

**Lucindia Claghorn, S.F.O**



This booklet of prayers is dedicated to my  
Beloved Goddaughter, Veronica Rose Denton,  
Affectionately known as “Vera”

## About the Author

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## Table of Contents

Introduction .....	8
Diagnosis.....	9
Treatment .....	12
Medications .....	16
Depression .....	19
Hallucinations.....	22
Thoughts .....	24
Emotions .....	27
Paranoia.....	30
Insomnia.....	33
Compulsions.....	35
Anger.....	38
Shame.....	41
Self Worth .....	43
Attitudes .....	46

Medicine.....	49
Commitment.....	53
Hospitalization.....	57
The Schizophrenic Paradox.....	60
Compassion.....	61
Thanksgiving.....	62
God's Will.....	63
Prayer.....	64
God Is Love.....	65
A Litany for the Mentally Ill.....	66
Lucindia.....	68



## Introduction

My Dear Beloved Vera,

I am writing this book of prayers for those with mental illness, for you, with the hope that it will help you to understand what mental illness feels like from someone who experiences mental illness on a daily basis. I want you to understand the suffering that comes directly from this illness and the suffering that comes from the rejection and isolation of the mentally ill, as a result of negative stereotypes, prejudice, ignorance and misinformation regarding mental illness.

I hope you show compassion, acceptance, and love to your mentally ill brothers and sisters. I hope you will become an “angel of love”, so that you reflect the healing love that God showers upon His mentally ill children, especially when His children are in pain. I hope you will work to alleviate, both the suffering from the illness and the suffering from stereotypes regarding mental illness that exist in the community. It is my fervent prayer that God will spare you from the ravages, pain and suffering that comes from mental illness. May you always be blest with good mental health.

If you have the misfortune of contracting mental illness, hope exists. You are not alone. God is always with you-on good days and especially bad days. God will always love and value you, no matter what the status of your mental health becomes. God never abandons you.

Mental illness is not hopeless. Even though there is a lot of pain and suffering with this illness, there is hope. There are effective treatments that allow a person to live a reasonably normal life. Please, pray for all those with mental illness, their families, and their caregivers. May you experience God’s peace, joy and love, now and forever.

Love, your Godmother

Lucinda Claghorn, S.F.O.

# Diagnosis

“For my enemy pursues me;  
he has crushed my life to the ground;  
he has left me dwelling in the dark, like  
those long dead.”

(Psalm 143)

Dear Lord,

I have been diagnosed with having schizophrenia. I am devastated. Out of all of the possible illnesses that I could develop or contract, I have most dreaded contracting schizophrenia. Not only do I suffer from a severe, major, and debilitating mental illness, but also I have been diagnosed with the worst of the major mental illnesses...schizophrenia! I tremble with fear and trepidation, as I contemplate all (or at least many) of the ramifications of living with schizophrenia.

I feel overwhelmed. I remember all of the horror stories that I have either read or heard through the media, particularly the bizarre and heinous crimes “reportedly” committed by schizophrenics. I remember the stories that I have heard, throughout my life, of those with schizophrenia, being confined to state mental hospitals for most or the rest of their natural lives. And then, I realize that I have this mental illness! I am scared. I am apprehensive about my future. Will I spend the rest of my life revolving in and out of psychiatric hospitals? Will I have any chance of living a meaningful and productive life? Or will I be trapped into a life of dire poverty, loneliness and despair?

My future is uncertain! My life is an upheaval! How will my friends and family accept me? How will they deal with the fact that I have a socially unacceptable mental illness? Will my loved ones still love and be supportive of me even when my illness is at its worst? As I begin the treatment process, I wonder about my prognosis with treatment. I have so many unanswered questions, regarding schizophrenia and its treatment. I wonder how or if I will successfully deal with my schizophrenia.

Dear Lord,

Help me to accept the fact that I have been diagnosed with schizophrenia. As I begin my treatment, help me to become educated about this particular mental illness, so that I may help myself and other people to understand and let go of all prevailing, negative and hurtful stereotypes that individuals and indeed my entire community possess and disseminate about schizophrenia. Help me to realize that even with, such a devastating mental illness, there is always hope and healing. All is NOT lost! You are with me; You are lavishly showering me with Your healing love and loving-kindness. I am bathed in Your divine love! As I begin my treatment, help me to experience my treatment as a pilgrimage into Your divine love and into Your divine compassion. Help me experience my journey to mental health as a journey into the healing mystery of Your healing love. Let me not forget that all progress in learning to live with schizophrenia is a precious gift from You. To be used for proclaiming and reflecting Your love and compassion to all members of Your human family.

May Your praise be ever in my mouth, in my heart, in my soul, in my mind and as a continual act of my will.

Amen.

Treatment  
“Though I am afflicted and poor,  
yet the Lord thinks of me.  
You are my help and my deliverer;  
O my God, hold not back!”  
(Psalm 40)

Dear Lord,

I have taken the first step in my recovery. I have admitted to myself that I have a mental illness. I realize that I cannot function well. I need professional help. Help me to find the appropriate psychiatrist, therapist or other mental health professional, as well as the most appropriate treatment program, so that I can begin my journey to mental health. Help me to learn to trust and be open with my doctor, so that I can learn to face my problems with courage and a renewed sense of hope. Help and guide my doctor to begin the process of liberating me from the prison that my mental illness has become for me. Grant me the grace to cooperate, to the best of my ability, with the treatment program that was outlined and developed for me, by my doctor or treatment team, so that I may reap all of the positive benefits that my treatment regimen has to offer me. Grant me the courage to take the necessary and difficult steps in the treatment process, even when I am terrified and apprehensive. Help me to know that during these difficult and painful steps that You are always with me—holding my hand at each and every one of these necessary steps in my process to mental health. Help me to persevere in my treatment program, even when I feel discouraged and overwhelmed by my mental illness and the entire treatment process.

Dear Lord,

I would like to make this progress at a constant rate, with no setbacks or relapses. Yet, dear Lord, as with any other illness, this is not always possible. Grant me the strength to persevere in the face of adversity, and the courage to continue my personal struggle for my sanity. Help me not to lose faith in Your will and desire for my recovery and growth. As I recover, help me to appreciate and savor the good days and grant me the strength to get through the bad days with courage and hope. Grant me the grace to be grateful for all the little acts of kindness and love, extended to me by my loved ones and others. As I become more stable, help me to express my gratitude to You, for any positive and healing growth that I experience in my treatment. Help me to become a person of gratitude, and not to become a person who is mean spirited or to become a person who dwells only on the negative aspects of the treatment process (or life and other human beings). Teach me to see the goodness and beauty in life and in other people, especially those who are dearest to me.

Teach me how to reflect and spread Your love to all people that I come in contact with in my daily life. Help me to become an “angel of love” within my sphere of influence. Help me to develop my spiritual life, as I journey along my road to recovery. Keep me focused on You and Your love, And not on my own deficiencies. Teach me to become focused on the needs of other people and not just focused on my own needs and myself. Let me not become selfish and self-centered. As I recover, deepen my appreciation for life and living. Help me to savor my relationship with You. Pour into my mending mind and soul your healing love and eternal hope. Help me to use the insights that I have gained, both from my mental illness and my treatment/therapy, in ways that promote growth, healing and community in myself and in all people with whom I come in contact.

Grant me the grace to spread the love and compassion that You constantly shower upon all of Your human children. To be granted the grace to truly, love, is to be called to participate in Your divine life, and thus, attain mental and spiritual health! Please be my constant companion, as I travel along the pilgrimage that You have prepared for me, as I recover from my mental illness. Help me to travel along this life-time-pilgrimage to wholeness, with courage and hope, with You, until I enter eternity with You at the end of my earthly life.

Amen.

Medications  
“Have pity on me, O Lord, for I am in distress;  
with sorrow my eye is consumed; my soul  
also, and my body.”  
(Psalm 31)

Dear Lord,

I am experiencing the hell that my mental illness is inflicting upon me. As a part of my treatment, I have been put on powerful psychiatric medications. This frightens me. I am unsure and apprehensive about both, the short-term and long-term effects that these medications are having, both in the present, and will have in the future on, both my body and on my mind. I do not want to be dependent on chemicals to maintain my sanity. This fact troubles me greatly. By taking these psychiatric medicines, I am forced to acknowledge and confront the fact that I do indeed suffer from a severe mental illness, that I cannot control by a mere act of my will. I can no longer deny that I am mentally ill. This acknowledgement has “hit me with full force”. I cannot run away from my mental illness, it is here to stay! I am being forced to be dependant on an outside chemical in order to control and alleviate my symptoms. This situation unsettles me, because I feel that I should control the actions and workings of my own mind. Yet, I am unable to accomplish this feat without the help of these chemicals. I don’t like this aspect of my mental illness and the treatment developed for me in order to effectively treat this illness.

I am forced to swallow my pride, as I ingest these medications. That act is very hurtful to me. My own self-sufficiency is shattered and wounded by the fact that I am dependant on psychiatric medicines, for the very gift of my sanity, as well as the ability to function in my daily life and within the community, of which I am a member. I really want to be able to function without these chemicals, yet dear Lord, I wish to do Your will, even if Your will entails something that is most distasteful to me.

Dear Lord,

Help me to accept that I am mentally ill and also to accept the fact that I am dependant on these psychiatric medications for my well-being and my ability to function well within society. Help me to see that these medications are a gift from You, to be used to alleviate my pain and suffering. They are not a punishment for my sin and offenses (real or imagined) against You. These chemicals are a gift of love from You in order to aid in my recovery and in the healing of my mental illness.

Help me to become fully cooperative in my treatment process and not to resist the use of the psychiatric medicines, even though this prospect is very distasteful to me. Help me to rely on Your healing love and strength, as the psychiatrist prescribes these chemicals, to aid in my recovery. I know that all healing...physical, mental, and spiritual comes directly from You. All else serves as Your vehicle to effect that healing. Help me to bask in Your special, divine and unconditional love that You infuse into me personally, as well as for all Your human family. I love You very much!

Amen.

Depression  
“For my life is spent with grief  
and my years with sighing;  
My strength has failed through affliction,  
And my bones are consumed.”  
(Psalm 31)

Dear Lord,

I feel hopeless. The light within me has gone out. There is nothing to live for. I feel alienated and rejected by You. I don't have the energy to complete my daily tasks. I am overwhelmed by extreme feelings of despair and worthlessness. I don't have the energy or will to cope with the demands of my daily life. I have no desire to live or even merely exist. I feel consumed by a cloud of utter blackness that permeates every fiber of my being. There is no way out. Death is a friend who beckons me into nothingness, as a means to mute the waves and waves of intense pain that surround me in the darkness of despair, worthlessness and utter hopelessness. Life is an exercise in futility. There is no meaning or purpose in living. All is lost! There is no redemption...no resurrection...there is only gloom, futility and eternal damnation.

These feelings never end. They grow stronger and stronger with each passing moment. The worst part of this depression is that I can't rely on the message of Your love to pull me out of these feelings. No matter how hard I try and persevere I can only focus on the negative, the futile and the searing pain that envelopes me. I can't feel Your healing love. I cannot feel Your message of hope and encouragement. All that I feel is the blinding blackness that engulfs me during these times. I pray for death to come and complete the spiraling down into pure, unadulterated nothingness; eternal damnation; and everlasting hopelessness and despair.

Dear Lord,

Help me to experience the wholeness of Your encouraging love and hope. Pour into my tortured mind the light of Your presence and love. Help me to know that the ravages of my mental illness cannot terminate Your love for me. Help me to know that, even in the darkest moments of despair, You are always with me. I am very precious to You! You want me to be Yours more than I can ever conceptualize or imagine. You will never abandon or reject me because of my depressive feelings that result from my mental illness. Help me to see that I am not damned and thus, consigned to the deepest realms of hell. I am experiencing the hell of my mental illness. If ever there exists on this earth a hell, that hell is the damnation of mental illness.

Mental illness is the closest experience of hell on this earth! Your love never ceases. Help me to hang on to You, even when everything around me seems futile and pointless. There is a purpose and meaning for every human life, no matter what my mental illness causes me to feel. I matter very much to You! Give me the strength to go about the business of my daily living with renewed energy and hope. Lift the shroud of despair from me, and turn it into the garment of life, resurrection, joy and hope, so that I can experience Your joy forever and ever.

Amen.

Hallucinations

“I hear the whispers of the crowd, that  
frighten me from every side,  
as they consult together against me,  
plotting to take my life.”

(Psalm 31)

Dear Lord,

I cannot trust my sensory input. I am afraid. I perceive things that are not real. I hear or I see or I smell things that don't exist anywhere else but in my tortured mind. Yet, dear Lord, they seem all too real to me! I cannot discern whether or not these things I perceive exist anywhere else, but in my ill brain. I am terrified. I can't make my hallucinations go away. I can't turn them off, as you would a light switch. I am overwhelmed and scared. It is as though I am experiencing a terrifying nightmare; only, I am wide-awake, with no hope of respite, during sleep or wakefulness. I can't tell my loved ones what I going through, because I am unsure of the reality or unreality of my sensory input. I can't express my terror at perceiving my hallucinations. I sense my loved ones discomfort in my presence. I sense their helplessness in alleviating, both my fear and hallucinations. My suffering increases and my fear is magnified. I do not know what to do. I feel so helpless and alone.

Dear Lord,

Quiet the terror that my sick brain is inflicting on me directly and indirectly on my loved ones and on those around me. Replace my fear and helplessness with the calm assurance that You are always with me, no matter what my tortured mind perceives. Help me to trust You, even when I cannot discern what is real and what is not. Help me to know that You are real. Your love for me is real, and that is what matters! Help me to rely on Your strength and love to get through the terrors and ravages of my mental illness.

Amen.

Thoughts  
“O Lord, how many are my adversaries!  
Many rise up against me!”  
(Psalm 3)

Dear Lord,

I can't trust my own thoughts and feelings. My mind reverberates chaos. My thoughts and my feelings swirl in a chaotic explosion within my tormented mind. I experience a flood of negative and painful emotions and thoughts. It is almost as though I am possessed by demons who continuously inflict pain, disorder and suffering on my tortured mind. I don't know which thoughts and feelings are based in reality and which ones are not. I am consumed by emotions that I cannot understand or control. I am approaching an abyss, or at least a precipice, where I am spiraling down into a whirlpool, which reflects the chaos that exists within my mind. This whirlpool of disordered thoughts and feelings drags me deeper and deeper into the terror of the mental illness. There is no escape. Because my inner self is so out of order, I can't feel or show appropriate emotions at the appropriate times and places. This increases, both the chaos within me and the isolation outside of me. Other people are uncomfortable in my presence, especially my loved ones. I sense that. I cannot communicate the feelings of overwhelming helplessness and dysfunction that I experience. Others consider me strange, demented or even downright evil. No one can see my terror at this disorganization and disintegration of my mind and personality. My pain and suffering consume me as the symptoms of my mental illness worsen and become more pronounced and bazaar. I am drowning in the ocean of chaos...and no one can save me!

My mind is a jumble of thoughts and emotions that I can't sort out. Reason has deserted me. I am at the mercy of blind, raw, raging emotion. I am at the mercy of overwhelming and persistent thoughts that I cannot shut out of my brain. Logic is meaningless. I cannot think or feel in a manner that is comprehensible to anyone, and that includes me! My brain is my enemy not my friend! I am alone and I am locked into the cruel prison of my mental illness, with the demons of my chaotic and painful thoughts and feelings as my jailers. I am scared. I am overwhelmed. I am alone.

Dear Lord,

Quiet the chaos of my thoughts and feelings. Give me peace from the disorder within my mind. Restore, to me, my ability to utilize the rational part of my brain to combat the lack of reasoning skills and abilities, so that I can deal effectively with my mental illness. Calm the raging torrent of raw emotion, usually fear, that permeates my mental life. Halt the flood of unceasing, persistent, irrational and unpleasant thoughts that also disturb my mental life. Banish chaos and fear from my mind. Release me from this cruel prison, in which I am incarcerated by the ravages of my mental illness. Shower me with Your healing love and calming peace. Grant me good mental health, so that I may fully experience the joy of Your presence and that I may sing Your praises, now and forever.

Amen.

Emotions

“Have pity on me, O Lord, for I am languishing;  
heal me, O Lord, for my body is in terror;  
My soul, too, is utterly terrified;  
But you, O Lord, how long...?  
(Psalm 6)

Dear Lord,

I am besieged by feelings that I and my family and friends cannot understand. Sometimes I am restless and agitated. I feel as though I can't remain still for even one second. My thoughts are racing through my brain – “a mile-a minute”. I can't slow them down or turn them off. I exhibit behavior that is frantic and frenetic. I can't concentrate on any thought or task, because my mind is bombarded by a torrent of thoughts and feelings. I am easily agitated or upset – usually by some trivial or seemingly unimportant word, action, or event that I would not react to when I am not in the throes of my mental illness. I am often hostile and belligerent for no apparent reason. I am impatient. I am overwhelmed by my mind's constant flood of thoughts and feelings. This restless state follows me to the night hours, when I try to sleep. I can't. My sick brain is causing me to feel as though I am losing my mind! I know that I am not thinking or behaving rationally. Yet, I can't stop or slow down this process. I want peace...I want quiet...but I find none...either during the day or at night when I try to sleep.

At the other extreme... I am often apathetic. I have no motivation or energy to accomplish even the simplest of tasks. My mind is dead...devoid of all thoughts and feelings. I am like an automaton inside. I just want to withdraw from the world and just vegetate. Every thought or act requires more energy than I possess. I am not lazy! The ravages of my mental illness overwhelm me. I have no interest in life or any part of the process of living. I am dying slowly and surely inside, if I am not already mentally and emotionally dead. I need help. I can't “snap out of it” by the will power alone. I can't “talk myself out of it”. I am at the mercy of a cruel and debilitating brain disorder. I am too overwhelmed to cope with life.

Dear Lord,

Quiet the torrential flood of thoughts and feelings bombarding my mind. Grant me peace and tranquility. Keep me from becoming agitated at those around me, especially my loved ones. Help me to be patient with myself and those people I come into contact with in my daily life. Pour the healing ointment of Your love and peace into my tortured mind. Heal the churning torrent of thoughts and feelings that overwhelm my mind, coping skills and abilities. Replace this churning with serenity, calmness and Your divine peace and emotional stability that, You alone can bestow on me.

Dear Lord, animate and enliven the dying embers of my dead mind. Grant me the energy, courage and motivation to live and continue to fight my battle with mental illness, even when, I feel so overwhelmed and defeated by that illness. At this point, I can't rely on anyone else but You for the will to continue my struggle with my mental illness. Help me to open my mind to You and Your healing love, and to those people You provide to ease my suffering. Breathe into me Your Spirit of love, both to animate when I am apathetic and to quiet me when I am agitated, now and forever. Amen.

Paranoia

“How long, O Lord? Will you utterly forget me?

How long will you hide your face from me?

How long shall I harbor sorrow in my soul,

Grief in my heart day after day?

How long will my enemy triumph over me?”

(Psalm 131: 2-3)

Dear Lord,

Fear permeates by being. I cannot trust anyone. Every person is a potential enemy, who is ready to inflict harm and chaos on my loved ones and me. I must be ever vigilant and watchful. I cannot relax. I cannot let my guard down. I am on edge. I don't know from whom or when or where the next threat comes. Danger is ever present. I am surrounded by forces and people who are plotting my downfall. There is no respite. I am besieged from every direction. The fear and apprehension grows. I am always tense and agitated. They consume and over whelm me. I try to reach out and trust someone. I can trust and confide in no one. I fear that others can read my thoughts and use those thoughts against me, in ways unknown to me. I am afraid. The tension I experience is unbearable and all consuming. I want to quiet the demons in my mind. These are the demons of mental illness...These are the demons of fear, suspiciousness, and paranoia. I can't form meaningful relationships with other people. I can't feel the joys of friendship and companionship. I can't trust my loved ones. Each gesture, each look, each word has a sinister meaning for me. I am suspicious of everyone! I am locked into the prison of the paranoia that exists within my troubled mind.

Dear Lord,

Quiet the demons of my mental illness. Help me to trust You, O Lord. Quash the ever present and ever nagging suspiciousness that results from my misconceptions of my environment and the motives of other people, especially my loved ones. Help me to form a meaningful relationship. Help me to trust my loved ones. Help me to form a trusting and lasting relationship with You, O Lord. Send forth Your love and Your spirit of trust to cast out the demons of fear and paranoia. Replace my paranoia with Your healing and trusting love. When I can't trust human beings, help me to trust and rely on You...now and forever. Release me from the paranoia that locks me into the prison of my mind, as a result of my mental illness.

Amen.

Insomnia

“My God, my God, why have you forsaken me,  
far from my prayer, from the words of my cry?  
O my God, I cry out by day, and you answer not;  
By night, and there is no relief for me.”  
(Psalm 22 I: 2-3)

Dear Lord,

I can't sleep. The night is long. Each passing minute seems as an eternity. I lie awake; unable to savor the healing and rejuvenating process sleep begins. I am tired...physically and mentally. I cannot quiet my troubled mind. All of my cares and problems surround me. I am worried. I can't focus my thoughts on anything or anyone...and that includes You, O Lord. I can't pray or mediate. I want to rest...to sleep and wake up refreshed the next morning. I do not. Each day I awake and grow more exhausted and I lack the energy to meet the challenges that each new day brings. I endure each passing night as a further manifestation of my mental illness. Each day and night remains the same. Each night is a night of unending suffering for me. I am exhausted.

Dear Lord,

Calm my restless and worried mind. Send forth Your healing sleep, so that I can face the next day with renewed vigor and a rejuvenated spirit. Grant me Your tranquility and rest. Help me to meet each day refreshed with Your peace and love, now and forever.

Amen.

Compulsions  
“My heart quakes within me,  
the terror of death has fallen upon me.  
Fear and trembling come upon me,  
And horror overwhelms me.”  
(Psalm 55 I: 5-6)

Dear Lord,

I have a thought (or thoughts) that I am obsessed with. No matter how hard I try, I cannot banish that thought from my mind. This obsession consumes me. The obsession is never out of my mind, or far from my consciousness. It is as though a phonograph record, or compact disc, or tape is stuck in a groove, and it continuously goes – round and round – inside my brain like the proverbial “broken record”. There is no relief for my loved ones or me. I become fixated on this obsession. It never leaves me!

Along with obsessive thoughts come compulsive behavior or, as they’re commonly called, rituals. These rituals give order to the chaos inside me. These ritualistic behaviors help to alleviate the growing anxiety that I experience. This anxiety is internal not environmental. Other people do not perceive these behaviors as anything else but eccentric or strange. I feel that I must complete my rituals in order to keep from experiencing the gloom and doom that my anxiety generates. This is the only way to bring order to my disordered mind. My rituals comfort me in this manner. I do not wish to be at the mercy of my obsessions and compulsions. My obsessions and compulsions are a prison for me, further confining me inside the prison in which my mental illness incarcerates me. People are alienated and become uncharitable when they come in contact with this aspect of my illness. My isolation grows more and more pronounced. My anxiety increases day by day, thus, frequency, magnitude and severity of my compulsions and obsessions also increase. I cannot turn them off. My burden of suffering increases. I am further locked inside the prison my mental illness creates for me.

Dear Lord,

Help to free me from the prison of my obsessions and ritualistic behavior. Liberate me from my anxiety. Replace the chaos and disorder within me with Your peace and serenity. Shower me with Your eternal joy and love. Heal my broken mind with Your divine wholeness. Pour out Your balm of love and kindness, now and forever.

Amen.

Anger

“Give up your anger, and forsake wrath;  
be not vexed, it will only harm you.”

(Psalm 37 1:8)

Dear Lord,

I am angry. I don't know how to turn it off. I am angry with myself for having contracted or developed mental illness. I am angry and frustrated because of all the missed or ruined opportunities and chances to succeed and live a normal life without the ravages and stigma associated with my mental illness. I am angry at my failure to attain and achieve my personal goals, dreams and aspirations due to my mental illness. I am angry that I was not blessed with good mental health. I am angry at my failure to overcome this illness by an act of sheer willpower or by sufficient faith in You. I am angry that I must endure the lack of charity and compassion dished out to me, by those around me, because my illness is mental rather than physical. I am angry that the community in which I live does not care to dispel the misinformation and prejudice which results in my rejection by that very same community, because my mind rather than my body is sick. I am angry because I am denied the same basic considerations, compassion and love that is extended to those who are physically sick. I am angry that those who are professing to love me and care about me abandon and reject me rather than find solutions and remedies to the problems my mental illness creates, so I can travel down the road to good health.

Sometimes, dear Lord, this anger becomes a knot in the pit of my stomach that is churning out its venom and poison. This anger eats at me, as does a malignant cancer. I do not wish to harbor this burning anger, which often borders on rage. I do not want revenge. I want some resolution and peace, so that I can let go of this anger that I often turn inward on myself. I can't resolve this problem by myself! I do not wish to become bitter and sour on life and people. I choose to be compassionate and loving, even when other people are not, especially to me. I need Your help to let go of the unbearable pain this anger inflicts on me and those around me. I cannot accomplish this act alone. I need help... Your divine help, my precious Lord.

Dear Lord,

Help me to relinquish this anger and its poisonous venom that resides inside me. Help me to forgive all of those who have, directly or indirectly, caused me great pain or who have increased my burden of suffering. Help me to forgive even You, for allowing me to suffer and experience the ravages and stigma (and all that goes with that experience) associated with my mental illness. Help me to forgive myself for my misfortune of being born with poor mental health, and thus, not having the rights, privileges and advantages that accompany the possession of good mental health. Help me to do what I can do to avoid harboring anger and rage at those around me, because I am burdened with my mental illness. Help me to experience Your healing love, peace, and joy. Help me to know that you have a special plan for every human being, even those (especially those) of us who daily (or even hourly) live and fight the constant battle for our sanity and our wholeness. Each day is an unending struggle for my sanity. Yet, dear Lord, let that not blind me to Your goodness, compassion, loving kindness, providence and most important of all, Your eternal and infinite love for me, regardless of the status of my mental health! Help me to focus my energies on recovering from this illness, not on the rage I feel and the injustices that I must endure. Help me to be open to do Your will, not my own will! I am Yours do with me what You will. Help me to be loving and compassionate, even when I am consumed with the poison of anger and my mental illness. Help me to reflect Your love for me to all of those who are within the sphere of my influence.

I love You, O Lord, I trust in Your goodness. Help me to live a life that is pleasing to You, and channels all the glory, honor, and praise to you, O Lord, now and forever.

Amen.

Shame  
“Hear my prayer, O Lord;  
to my cry give ear;  
to my weeping be not deaf!  
For I am but a wayfarer before you.”  
(Psalm 39 IV: 13)

Dear Lord,

I feel rejected and hurt when others, especially those close to me, treat me differently, because they do not understand my mental illness. I feel unwanted and deeply wounded when I am ridiculed, or hear unkind remarks or endure stares or other gestures, because my family, friends, strangers and even the entire community do not care to dispel the darkness of misinformation and prejudice when dealing with or coming in contact with me and my mental illness. I feel, as though, I am a throw away person, who is consigned to everybody's dung heap which consists of unwanted, despised and disposable people. I need compassion, acceptance, understanding, support and love in dealing with my journey to mental health, not rejection and ostracism.

Dear Lord,

Please help me to fully experience the healing power of Your infinite, unconditional and eternal love for me. Help me to realize that I am precious in Your sight! Help me to forgive and extend compassion to all of those people, who by their ignorance and unkindness increase my burden of suffering and isolation. Help me to find people who will love me and care about me, and be supportive of me, on my road to recovery.

Amen.

Self Worth

“Save me, O God, for the waters threaten my life;  
I am sunk in the abysmal swamp  
Where there is no foothold;  
I have reached the watery depths;  
The flood overwhelms me.”  
(Psalm 69 I: 2-3)

Dear Lord,

I don't feel as though I am a worthwhile person. I feel, as though I am the very personification of evil. I have failed You most of my life, as a result of the things that I have done or said, as a consequence of or under the influence of my mental illness. By my erratic behavior, I have destroyed many meaningful or potentially meaningful relationships. I have hurt the very people that mean the most to me and that deeply care about me. Most of all, I have let You down. I have failed to live in such a way, as to reflect Your love and compassion to other people, especially those who are dearest to me. I have been selfish and self-centered, preferring to focus only on my own needs, instead of reaching out to others, who are in greater need than I currently am. I feel dead inside. I feel, as though, nothing exists inside me, but pure unadulterated nothingness. I can't feel love or joy or compassion. The only feelings that I am capable of feeling are the unpleasant emotions such as anger or despair. I can't return the love that my loved ones give to me, I feel so evil. I feel like an unfeeling, cold monster. I have let You down. I don't want to be this way. I WANT to love and to be compassionate. I don't know what to do. I do not know how to improve my emotional life, so that I can feel that I am not the very personification of evil. I want to live for You. I want to be that person that you created and intended me to become not the self-absorbed person that my mental illness has allowed or caused me to become. Help me to achieve this goal towards good mental, emotional and especially good spiritual health.

Dear Lord,

Help me to sort out what has become a spiritual problem that needs to be addressed by You and me; and what is symptomatic of my mental illness. Help me to understand that, even when I fail to love, You continue to love me, regardless of how badly I have “missed the mark.” Your mercy and forgiveness are overflowing and is beyond my comprehension. I cannot fathom the breadth and depth of Your forgiveness, mercy and love for me. Help me to take the necessary steps that I am capable of taking, within the limits that my mental illness places on me, so that I become a little less selfish and self-centered, today, beginning with this very moment! And when I fail to be a loving human being help me continue to keep trying, and to rely on Your mercy and forgiveness. Help me not to use or allow my mental illness to develop in such a way that I become mean- spirited and selfish. To the extent that I am able, help me to reflect Your love and compassion to all within the circle of my influence. Hopefully, someday, if it is Your desire, I will not feel so dead inside and evil in Your sight. Help me to feel Your love and respond appropriately to those people who do love and care about me, even when I can’t feel anything inside me. Help me to love You and my fellow human beings, in this and in the next life, now and forever.

Amen.

Attitudes  
“Rescue me out of the mire; may I not sink!  
May I be rescued from my foes,  
And from the watery depths,  
You know my reproach, my shame and my ignominy,”  
(Psalm 69)

Dear Lord,

Help me to cope with those attitudes held by others that increase my burden of suffering. Some of these attitudes perpetuate the misinformation and prejudice shown to those of us with mental illness. Some of these hurtful attitudes are as follows: “All mentally ill people are violent and dangerous, and thus, should be feared!” This attitude increases my isolation and loneliness. I cannot feel comfortable around other people, if I sense their apprehension, fear, and discomfort in my presence. “All a mentally ill person needs to do in order to overcome mental illness, is to have a greater or stronger faith in God and in His desire and ability to heal mental illness.” Yet, faith alone will not heal me, anymore than mere faith will enable a paraplegic to walk. I know that faith is very important. Mental illness is not the same as spiritual illness, in the same way that cancer is a physical illness not a spiritual illness. Mental illness may have a spiritual component; spiritual illnesses are the result of conscious and deliberate choices. Mental illness is a physiological illness with psychiatric symptoms. It is a brain disorder. It is not the result of poor moral or ethical choices. Mental illness is not the result of a lack of faith! Paraplegia is not the result of a lack of faith. A caring person would not dream of telling a paraplegic-“Your inability to walk is due to your lack of faith.” Why do caring people inflict more pain on those of us with mental illness, by expressing such an inaccurate view of the cause of my mental illness? I often wonder if I lack faith and/or goodness. Sometimes I wonder if my mental illness is a divine punishment for my misdeeds, sins, or something else that is evil or bad existing within my mind and soul. This attitude often increases my alienation and isolation from You and this increases my depression and despair. I do not think that You are a cruel or vindictive god. You have a plan for my life, indeed for every human life, even if I can’t understand that plan. I don’t think You love me any less because my illness is mental rather than physical. I don’t think You love me any less than You love mentally healthy people. Help me to have faith in Your personal love for me and in Your loving kindness, providence and forgiveness for all of those of us with mental illness. Help me to understand that my mental illness is not a punishment or a sign of our disfavor towards me.

Mentally ill people can just ‘snap out of it’ if they really tried or wanted to”. This is a cruel attitude! No one, especially those of us with mental illness, would voluntarily put ourselves in this life situation, which causes and results in so much pain, suffering and rejection directed toward us and those closest to us. If, there were any way anyone of us could terminate our mental illness – we would do so in a heartbeat! Mental illness would cease to be a problem, if only we could overcome it by an act of the will alone. Every mentally ill person would be instantly cured. I can’t overcome this illness by a mere act of will, if I could I would. A paraplegic cannot get up and walk by a mere act of the will. Every day is a struggle for sanity. Sanity does not come easily for me. I DON’T want to be mentally ill. It is simple as that!

Dear Lord,

Help me to forgive those who harbor these and other hurtful attitudes toward me, as a result of my mental illness. Help those around me to understand that these attitudes further lock me into the prison of my mental illness. Help me to tap into Your infinite and everlasting love for me. Help the people around me and in my culture and community to dispel those myths, which hurt and isolate, in addition to dehumanizing those with mental illness. Help out mentally healthy brothers and sisters to also treat us as though we are Your children, even though they do not understand our illness. You love Your mentally ill children very much. Help me to focus on that reality and, not on the pain inflicted on me by the thoughtless, inaccurate and harmful stereotypes that exist in our society. Help me to be accepted, loved and valued by the very people who discriminate against me because of their ignorance about mental illness.

Help me to be more loving and tolerant toward all of Your children, regardless of their circumstances. Help me to forgive all of those who have hurt me deliberately or inadvertently, as a result of ignorance, thoughtlessness or prejudice. Help me not harbor any grudges, bitterness, hate, malice or anger. Help me to love You and all of my brothers and sisters, so that Your divine love will become a healing and community building presence in our divisive and unloving world.

Amen.

Medicine  
“Out of the depths I cry to you, O Lord;  
Lord, hear my voice!  
Let your ears be attentive  
To my voice in supplication.”  
(Psalm 130 I: 1-2)

Dear Lord,

Powerful psychiatric medicines have been prescribed for me in order to control the symptoms of my mental illness. Even though, this medicine is prescribed for me, in order to help me; there are some aspects of this part of my treatment that trouble me. I feel, as though, these drugs produce a false me. I am not experiencing the real me. I am experiencing a chemically induced me. The real me is hidden or submerged by these powerful drugs. This fact troubles me. Sometimes, I am confused as to who is the real or authentic me...a non-medicated a medicated or me me. I know and understand that my mental illness is the source and cause of my greatest pain and suffering. Mental illness is sheer agony. Yet, I do not like to feel as though the medicated me is the false or fake me. I also feel, as though these drugs control and subdue me. This greatly frightens me. It is as though I am rendered unacceptable as I am and that I must be controlled and subdued by the psychiatric drugs in order to be rendered acceptable by the community, of which, I am a member. This fact hurts me and my self-esteem and self-image.

I do not like the idea of my brain (mind) being controlled by an external agent (or substance), that is anything that is outside of my will or my control! I would like to believe that I and I alone control my thoughts, feelings and behavior...not these powerful drugs. It is most unsettling to me to be forced to realize that these medicines do control my brain (chemistry) and thus, control and ease the symptoms of my mental illness. As a result, I do feel better and I do function better within my community. It really galls me to be forced to admit to myself (and my treatment team) that I am dependent on these drugs for not only my sanity, but also my well-being. I cannot control me! I actually feel the effects of this medicine...I feel, as though, some external agent or substance that is beyond my control is in fact control and influence over me. I don't like these feelings that are generated by ingesting these medicines. The feelings unnerve me.

I also, don't feel that my emotions are a genuine or accurate reflection of how I really feel. I am disconnected from my internal mental and emotional life. My emotions and thoughts are masked. They are subdued. They are unreal. These feelings add to my experiencing my thought and emotions as being unreal, false or just plain fake. I cannot always tell the difference between the experiencing of my symptoms of my mental illness and the experiencing of the psychological side effects generated by these powerful drugs. This fact greatly disturbs, frightens and angers me. I resent being forced to ingest medications that add to my level of discomfort concerning my inner mental and emotional life, even when that very same medicine also, greatly eases and alleviates the pain and suffering caused by my mental illness. I resent being forced to submit to the drugs influence and control over me, even when, that very control allows me to function better and feel better!

Dear Lord,

Help me to relinquish my need to control every facet of my life (mental and emotional). You are in control, not me! You are Lord of the universe, I am not. Help me to graciously submit to the effects of these psychiatric drugs, as a means to ultimately submit my will to Your most holy will no matter how much I dislike the effects of the chemicals. Help me to realize and understand that this facet of my treatment is in my best interests. Grant me, the grace to accept this fact, as Your will for me, as part of my psychological and spiritual growth and well being, (even if I need to be medicated for the rest of my natural life).

Help me to realize that I am not unacceptable to You, because I need the help of these powerful drugs. These powerful psychiatric medicines are not punishment for "bad" behavior, thoughts or feelings, these drugs are an act of love coming from You, in order to alleviate the intense suffering inflicted on me by my mental illness. Help me to be truly grateful for this precious gift from You to me. Heal me of the fear, resentment, anger, and dislike that I harbor within myself and that I project to my treatment team, because they insist on my compliance with my medication regimen.

Help me to fully cooperate with my psychiatrist (or other mental health professionals) and fully comply with all aspects of my treatment program. Help these psychiatric drugs to really do the job of controlling my psychiatric symptoms, without causing a plethora of many unpleasant side effects, psychological as well as physical.

Finally, dear Lord, help me to focus on Your unconditional, infinite and eternal love for me, personally. Help the mental health professionals develop and utilize the best possible psychiatric medications to effectively treat my mental illness. Thank you, dear Lord, for Your love and loving-kindness that You lavishly shower upon me.

Amen.

Commitment

“They have spoken to me with lying tongues,  
and with words of hatred they have encompassed me  
and have attacked me without cause.”

(Psalm 109 I: 2-3)

Dear Lord,

I am in the process of being committed to the state mental hospital, very much, against my will! I am scared and angry that the courts are preparing to force me to go to a place that I most assuredly do not want to go to. I feel betrayed by my loved ones and my caretakers, whom I have trusted and relied upon, because they have forced me to be put in a place, that at the very least, I am very apprehensive about and fear with all my being! I don't know how long I will be forced to remain in this mental hospital. I remember all of the horror stories that I ever heard or read concerning state mental hospitals. I am becoming more and more agitated and terrified.

I am taken to the local probate Judge, who has the power to either send me home or to force me to remain in a place where my wishes are not always honored or respected. It is a helpless and frightening place and feeling to experience the agony and knowledge that I do not have control over my immediate fate. It is an overwhelming feeling of helplessness, to be dependent on a local government official (the Probate Judge), to determine my fate...to know that I am not in control over the basic elements of my life. Facets that most people take for granted, for example, my place of residence or my daily routine. It is overwhelming to me to be placed in a situation where other people are deciding my fate, without any desired input from me. The fear and anxiety that accompany this process are enormous and unbearable.

When the Probate Judge orders me committed to the state mental hospital I feel that the end of my world has truly come! I am devastated, terrified and traumatized! I am being forced to leave my family and friends, in order to go to a place where I am not loved or valued. I am really at the mercy of the staff who works in that hospital and I have no say in my treatment plan or process. This is a very demeaning and humiliating experience for me. I am told what, with whom, how, where and when to do or not do, whether or not I agree with the directions given to me. Decisions regarding my care and relating to my daily activities are made without any input from me. The whole commitment process is an intimidating; fearful, devastating and traumatic experience...an experience that I never wish to repeat!

It is demeaning to me to be treated as an incompetent adult, who is also suffering the agony that my mental illness is inflicting upon me. This unwelcome process intensifies my passion. This pain is truly unbearable and overwhelming to me. I am at my wits end. My coping skills are at their lowest ebb. This is for me, the most traumatic event in my whole life. I am experiencing my darkest hour! Lord, be ever with me. Do not allow me to suffer this agony alone.

Dear Lord,

Help me to accept this process and pain as Your will for me, at this particular time in my life, both for my own personal growth and also for promoting and proclaiming Your honor and glory throughout the universe. Help me accept this terrible misfortune as Your will, even when every fiber of my being is crying out, "Spare me the misfortune and agony that this process inflicting upon me!"

Give me Your peace and calm my terror, anxiety and despair concerning this experience. Help me to rely upon Your strength to transcend and triumph over this process. Give me the faith and the hope that You have good reason for having me committed to a state mental hospital and that these events are temporary, and that better days are ahead.

Heal me of the resentment, bitterness and anger that I feel and direct toward those people who have facilitated my commitment to this mental hospital, against my will, and have increased my burden of suffering. Help me to take from this horrid experience a renewed sense and remembrance of Your love for me personally and the compassion that You so generously lavish upon me. Help me to use this experience to deepen and increase both my love and compassion toward You and indeed all of Your children who are suffering pain and misfortune. Help me to promote and proclaim Your glory and honor, as this experience, allows me to participate more fully, in a unique way, to further the building of Your kingdom on earth. Help me to reflect Your healing love to all Your children that I meet, within the sphere of my influence. May Your praise be always in my mouth and heart. Help me to become an instrument, used by You, to carry out Your will and divine plan, both in my personal redemption and in the redemption of the universe.

Dear Lord, I praise and adore You in this my darkest hour and also during those times when I am functioning well. I love You with all of my heart, soul, mind, will, strength and being. I offer to You the most perfect act of love that I am capable of rendering to You! There is no one greater and more loving than You, O Lord. Help me to focus on that fact throughout this traumatic process.

Finally, dear Lord, increase my love and devotion to You, no matter where this experience leads me.

Amen.

Hospitalization

“With a loud voice I cry out to the Lord;  
with a loud voice I beseech the Lord.  
My complaint I pour out before him;  
Before him I lay bare my distress.”  
(Psalm 142 1:2-3)

Dear Lord,

I have hit “rock bottom.” I have been involuntarily placed in a state mental hospital. Help me to live and triumph through this horrific nightmare. I am humiliated, resentful and angry because I have been forced into this state mental hospital against my wishes. I am apprehensive and scared! I am in the deepest throes of my mental illness. I am absolutely miserable. I feel alone, forgotten and abandoned. I am reminded, both by my own personal suffering and the observation of the pain and suffering of other patients, in here, who exhibit and experience the fact that mental illness is truly the “illness from hell!” Help me to deal with the trauma of being locked up on a locked ward where all of my freedoms have been curtailed. Help me to deal with the incredible boredom generated and experienced by being locked into this horrid place! Help me to compassionately deal with the hospital staff who are insensitive to my needs, and who treat me as though I am a child who has no sense or credibility. Help me to deal with the added stigma of having been placed in a state mental hospital against my will, and with all of the unpleasant and difficult ramifications that this experience of hospitalization generates. Help me to maintain my dignity and faith in a place where I am labeled as a mental patient and where I am considered dirt, or at least not quite as good or valued as my non-mentally ill brothers and sisters. Help me to constructively deal with the damage this experience has dealt to my self-esteem. Dear Lord, help me to get out of this terrible place and never return! Help me, O Lord. I need You now in my darkest hour more than ever. Help me to rely on Your healing love and strength to transcend this difficult experience.

Dear Lord,

Help me to know (really know) that in my darkest hour You are here with me. I am not forgotten, abandoned, or alone...You are with me. Help me to focus on Your love for me and on Your compassion and loving-kindness that You extend to all of Your children who are experiencing this “illness from hell”...mental illness. Help me to truly understand that You have not abandoned, forgotten or punished me because I am experiencing mental illness. Help me to realize and remember that no matter what other people or society think of those of us with mental illness, that we are (I am), precious in Your sight. I am important and greatly valued by You, not only when I am stable and functioning well, but also, when I am in the deepest throes of my mental illness. Help me to remember that this nightmare will pass and end to be replaced by better days. While I am locked in here help me to focus on Your eternal and infinite love for me personally. Help me not to become bitter, angry or resentful because I have been placed involuntarily in a state mental hospital. Help me to forgive all of the indignities, inconveniences and insensitivity’s inflicted upon me by this experience of hospitalization, the staff or the other patients. Help me to forgive all of the wrongs done to me (real or imagined) while I am in this place.

Dear Lord, help me to take this unpleasant and most difficult experience and use it in such a way as to enhance Your glory and honor. May Your praise be always on my lips and in my heart. Help me to use this experience to further Your work of building Your kingdom on earth. Please, infuse into me more compassion, and more love, as I journey through life, as I experience the hell that my mental illness continuously inflicts upon me. Help me to bask in Your healing love, as I travel on the road to recovery.

Thank you for loving me in my most vulnerable and weakest state, and in the darkest hour of my life. Help me to go forth reflecting to other people the great love You have for me.

Amen

The Schizophrenic Paradox  
Why is it, when we talk to God  
We're said to be praying.  
But, when God talks to us,  
We're said to be schizophrenic?

(Author Unknown)

## COMPASSION

Dear Lord,

Bless and protect all caregivers, mental health professionals, and family and friends of those of us who are mentally ill. Keep them closest to You and shower them with your choicest blessings and graces. Give those who deal with the mentally ill patience and love. Grant compassion and understanding to family, friends and the entire community who surround the mentally sick. Help people to love and accept those who have mental illness even when these people become difficult to deal with or tolerate due to their particular manifestation of mental illness. Forgive the lack of compassion and sensitivity that is often shown to the mentally disturbed, by unthinking and ignorant family, friends, and especially by society as a whole. Help people to extend their love, compassion and acceptance to this most difficult and vulnerable group of suffering people. Help others to act and love in such a way, as not to increase the burden of suffering of our mentally ill brothers and sisters. Bless those who devote their time, energy, resources, and most of all, their love to those who suffer from the ravages of mental illness.

Dear Lord, we give You thanks for all of Your “Angels of Love” wherever they are found. Thank you, O Lord, for Your love and compassion for all Your children, especially those with mental illness.

Amen.

## THANKSGIVING

Dear Lord,

I thank You for all Your graces, blessings and gifts that You have granted me, as a direct or indirect result of my experiences with my mental illness. Thank you for all of the insights that I have gained. Thank you for the love You have showered upon me through Your “Angels of Love,” especially at the times of my greatest suffering. Thank you for Your love, providence, protection, guidance and loving-kindness that You have shown to me, especially on my darkest days.

O Lord, I wish to praise and glorify You in this life and in the next, forever and ever. May I become a vessel of Your love and Your praise, now and forever.

Amen.

## GOD'S WILL

Dear Lord,

Grant me the strength, courage, resolve and will to live with my mental illness, in such a way as to please and glorify You. Help me to abandon myself to Your loving will and constant love. Grant me the grace and resolve to unite my intense suffering, from my mental illness, to Your sufferings and passion, for the redemption of the universe, especially for Your frail, fragile and fragmented human family. Help me to also focus on doing Your will, even when I am experiencing suffering and distress, or when I do not feel like putting Your will above my own. Help me to live only for You, no matter what is in store for me in the future. Help me to become a vessel of Your love and compassion to all people that I come into contact with, in my circle of influence, all the days of my life. Let me always center on You and Your will not on myself and my own will, or even my mental illness. Help me to do what good I can in order to build Your kingdom and earth, and to live with You forever in heaven.

Amen.

## PRAYER

The highest act of love that any person can render  
To another person is to pray for that person!  
To pray for someone is ask God, who is loved personified, to shower  
His choicest blessings, graces and gifts on that person.  
What can be a greater act of love that asking God, the Almighty,  
To watch over a loved one?  
Thus, the highest act of love is to pray for another person.

## GOD IS LOVE

God, the Father is love personified.

God, the Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, is love incarnate.

God, the Holy Spirit, is the Spirit of Love.

When a person loves, he or she participates in the Divine Life of the Triune God. When someone loves another person, that love becomes a reflection of God's love for that person, and thus, reflects the Divine Life of God, which is expressed in the phrase:

“God is Love...and God is the very essence of Love.”

## A LITANY FOR THE MENTALLY ILL

God, the Father of Love,

Shower Your love upon Your mentally ill children.

Jesus, Love Incarnate,

Heal the ravages of mental illness with Your healing balm.

God, the Spirit of Love,

Enlighten the darkness mental illness brings with Your loving Wisdom.

God, the Divine Lover,

Infuse love into the hearts of all Your children, especially the Caregivers of the mentally ill.

God, the Divine Psychiatrist,

Heal the mentally ill of the pain and agony this illness brings.

God, the Divine Counselor,

Grant the mental health profession the knowledge and wisdom needed to alleviate the agony that mental illness brings to its sufferers and loved ones.

God, the Just One,

Establish justice and equity for the mentally ill within the community.

God, the Merciful One,

Forgive all of the injustices, lack of kindness and cruelty directed toward the mentally ill by the mentally healthy.

God, the Compassionate One,

Bring compassion, acceptance, and love, on the part of society, to those with mental illness.

Mary, Our Lady of Mental Peace,  
Bring mental health to those with mental illness.

Mary, Mother of God,  
Bring to the mentally ill, a mother's love and concern.

Mary, Mother of Us All,  
Bring us to a deeper love for your Son, Jesus, the Divine Psychiatrist.

St. Theresa, the Little flower of Jesus,  
Let your roses of love fall from heaven upon the mentally ill.

St. Francis of Assisi,  
Intercede, on behalf of the mentally ill, and for our acceptance into our communities, our culture and our society.

St. Dymphna,  
Intercede, on behalf of the mentally ill, for a cure for mental illness and for cessation and easing of the suffering caused by this illness.

St. Albert the Great,  
Intercede, on behalf of the mentally ill, that scientists will develop effective treatments and techniques to treat and hopefully cure mental illness.

St. Joseph Benedict Labre,  
Intercede, on behalf of the mentally ill, so that justice and equity will be extended to the mentally ill.

Blessed Padre Pio,  
Intercede, on behalf of the mentally ill, so that holy and compassionate Spiritual directors (especially confessors), will be found, and trained, so that we may be guided on the path that leads to the experience of the fullness of God's healing love, and God's loving-kindness for those of us who suffer from the ravages of mental illness.

Amen.

## Lucindia

When just a teenager Lucindia Claghorn was diagnosed with Schizophrenia and her 30-year journey within the mental health healthcare system began. In the past ten years she has used her story to advocate for those with mental illness. Her advocacy for others like herself who have a mental illness is tireless. So much so that our leaders within the community have recognized her work. Lucindia has won the Heart of Gold Award for Support of MHASWA, The Respect Award from the Alabama Dept of Mental Health, the Lilly Re-Integration Award, the Eli Lilly Heroes in the Fight Award for Advocacy in Alabama, and Mental Health America's Clifford Beers National Award for Advocacy.

Thirty years ago she began her volunteer work with Mental Health America in Southwest Alabama. She has been an office volunteer, she wrote the first history of MHASWA and with time became an active board member. She is our chaplain and has served as recording secretary, and is one of the consumer representative to the board of directors. Lucindia has been the number one personal fund-raiser in every event we have sponsored for the past ten years.

Five years ago she determinedly overcame her fear of traveling overnight to attend our National Conference. We had been bringing information on Schizophrenic's Anonymous to the board for review as a possible program. SA's representatives interviewed her and they in turn interviewed her, which led to a profile of her life in their nationally distributed magazine. Subsequently Lucindia and MHASWA established the first group with just two members. One of Lucindia's most effective tools is her book of poems and prayers, Angel of Love, which she gives to anyone who might need to understand her journey from a more personal perspective.

She has worked for thirty years through The Red Cross. They have recognized her for her service many times as a case-manager for their outreach programs. Since she was a young woman she worked successfully to become member of the Catholic Church, presently she joyfully serves a lay reader at her church. She is an active and avid speaker to the Mobile Police Department, The University of South Alabama, Springhill College, and the Mobile Transit System, everywhere she can educate, illuminate and fulfill her dream of a world of acceptance and tolerance.

Lucindia's remarkable life cannot be summarized, since as yet it has no end. We hope you consider her life's work so far, as notable as we do.

MHASWA, 2009

