

A Pastoral Care
Workbook by

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You Are Not Alone

**RESOURCES & SUPPORT FOR
THOSE AFFECTED BY SUICIDE**

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When You Need Support

If you are currently experiencing a mental health crisis or are with someone who is, please reach out for help. You can call, text, or chat 988 to reach the National Suicide Prevention hotline or go directly to the nearest emergency room.

Support Groups

- [The Compassionate Friends](#) facilitates in-person groups, which you can find [here](#), as well as dozens of closed Facebook groups, one called [“Loss Due to Suicide.”](#)
- [Alliance of Hope](#) provides information, consultations, and support to suicide loss survivors through its website and online community forum. It operates like a 24/7 support group supervised by trained moderators and a mental health professional. The forum includes such topics as “grief, blame and forgiveness” and “parents who lost children.”
- The American Foundation for Suicide Prevention has their [A.F.S.P. support group listing](#)

Find a Counselor:

- Visit [Catholic Charities Website](#) to find a local chapter who can help direct you to local mental health resources.

General Resources

- [National Suicide Prevention Hotline](#)
- [National Alliance on Mental Illness \(NAMI\)](#)
- The American Foundation for Suicide Prevention [page](#) for survivors of suicide loss.
- The American Association of Suicidology’s [Suicide Loss](#) page.
- [Survivors of Suicide Loss](#)
- [Center for Loss](#)
- [Brett Thomas Doussan \(BTD\) Foundation](#)
- [To Write Love on Her Arms](#)



When You Need Words

For Adults

Catholic Books about Suicide

- [*When a Loved One Dies by Suicide*](#) by the Association of Catholic Mental Health Ministers
- [*After Suicide: There is Hope for Them and For You*](#) by Fr Chris Alar
- [*Bruised and Wounded: Struggling to Understand Suicide*](#) by Fr. Ron Rolheiser

Books about Grief & for the Grieving

- [*Rivers of Sorrow, Currents of Hope*](#) by Paula D'Arcy
- [*The Gift of the Red Bird: The Story of Divine Encounter*](#) by Paula D'Arcy
- [*Stars at Night: When Darkness Unfolds as Light*](#) by Paula D'Arcy
- [*When People Grieve: The Power of Love in the Midst of Pain*](#) by Paula D'arcy
- [*A Cure for Sorrow: A Book of Blessings for Times of Grief*](#) by Jan Richardson
- [*The Restless Heart: Finding Our Spiritual Home in Times of Lonliness*](#) by Fr. Ron Rolheiser
- [*A Sorrow Shared*](#) by Henri Nouwen
- [*My New Friend Grief*](#) by Anna Hodges Oginsky
- [*The Gift of Peace: Personal Reflections*](#) by Cardinal Bernardin
- [*May I walk you home? Courage & Comfort for Caregivers of the Very Ill*](#) by Joyce Rupp
- [*Praying Our Goodbyes*](#) by Joyce Rupp
- [*May You Find Comfort: A Blessing for Times of Grieving*](#) by Joyce Rupp
- [*My Soul Feels Lean: Poems of Loss and Restoration*](#) by Joyce Rupp
- [*Your Sorrow is My Sorrow: Hope and Strength in Times of Suffering*](#) by Joyce Rupp
- [*A friend Indeed: Help Those You Love When They Grieve*](#) by Amy Florian
- [*May I Walk You Home? Sharing Christ's Love with the Dying*](#) by Melody Rossi

Online Reading

- [Bruised and Wounded: Understanding Suicide](#)
- [Praying when it's hard](#)
- [To Write Love on Her Arms Blog](#)



When You Need Words

For Children

Books about Suicide

- [Bart Speaks Out!: Breaking the Silence on Suicide](#) by Jonathan & Linda Goldman
- [After Suicide: Activity Book for Grieving Kids](#) by The Dougy Center
- [Someone I loved Died of Suicide](#) by Doreen Cammarata

Books about Death, Loss, & Grieving

- [Tear Soup: A Recipe for Healing After Loss](#) by Pat Schwiebert & Chuck DeKlyen
- [When Dinosaurs Die: A Guide to Understanding Death](#) by Laurie Kransy Brown
- [Ida, Always](#) by Caron Lewis and Charles Santoso
- [The Invisible String](#) by Patrice Karst
- [Why do I Feel So Sad?](#) by Tracy Lambert-Prater, LPC
- [What Cloud is my Grandma in?:](#) by Kim Vesey & Amy Gantt (A series based on various loved ones)
- [Voyage to the Star Kingdom](#) by Anne Riley
- [The Moon is Always Round](#) by Johnathan Gibson
- [Heaven for Kids](#) by Randy Alcorn
- [The Fall of Freddie the Leaf: A Story of Life for All Ages](#) by Leo Buscaglia
- [The Tenth Good Thing About Barney](#) by Judith Viorst
- [Moody Cow Meditates](#) by Kerry Lee Maclean
- [Sitting Still Like A Frog Activity Book](#) by Eline Snel and Marc Bourtavant
- [Children Also Grieve: Talking about Death and Healing](#) by Linda Goldman
- [Sometimes Life is Just Not Fair: Hope for Kids Through Grief & Loss](#) by Fr Joe Kempf

Online Reading

- Explaining Suicide to Children
 - [Winston's Wish: Explaining Suicide to Children](#)
 - [Ele's Place: Explaining Suicide to Children](#)
 - [How Others Told Children About Suicide](#)
- [Complete Guide to Helping Children Cope with Grief](#) from the Child Mind Institute
- [When Families Grieve: Caregiver Guide](#) from Sesame Workshop

For Teenagers

Books about Death, Loss, & Grieving

- [Chill and Spill: A Place to Put it Down & Work it Out](#) by Stephanie Lorig
- [Out of the Blue: Making Memories Last When Someone has Died](#) by Winton's Wish
- [Straight Talk about Death for Teenagers](#) by Earl Grolman

When You're Ministering to Others

Resources for Ministers

- [Association of Catholic Mental Health Ministers](#)
 - [Responding to Suicide: A Pastoral Handbook for Catholic Leaders](#)
 - [Worship & Liturgy Resources](#)
 - [Developing Spiritual Support Groups](#)
 - [Parish & Ministry Outreach](#)
 - [Educational Resources](#)
- Bulk booklets: [After Suicide: 7 things for Catholics to Know](#)
- [Words Matter: Learning the Language to Use](#)
- [Suicide Prevention Ministry: Resources for Clergy & Lay Leaders](#)
- [Sanctuary Mental Health Ministry's Sanctuary Course for Catholics](#)
- [Mental Health: A Guide for Faith Leaders](#)
- [QPR Institute](#)
- [Suicide Prevention Resource Center for Faith Communities](#)
- [National Catholic Partnership on Disability's Council on Mental Illness](#)
 - [Mental Illness Theological Framework](#)

Ministering to Teens

- [Mental Health: Out of the Darkness & Into the Light](#) from NCYFM
- [Speaking with Teens about Mental Health Toolkit](#) from NAMI
- [Hope Squad](#): Peer-to-peer ministry

When You Need to Pray

The prayers on the next pages are offered as ways to bring all you are holding to God. They are available as guided audio prayers in our free [Guided Audio Prayer Library](#) made possible through the Ignatian Media Lab, a program of the Jesuit Conference of the US & Canada. Here's the direct link to the [You Are Not Alone playlist](#) for those who are praying through grief. Visit beckyeldredge.com/resources for more resources on prayer.

Triple Colloquy

As we carry the areas of our lives and the world that need God's mercy to prayer, we pause and have three intimate conversations: first with Mary, then with Jesus, and then with God. At the end of each conversation, we ask:

- What have I done for Christ?
- What am I doing for Christ?
- What ought I do for Christ?

Get quiet and go to your inner chapel. As you lean into God's promise of being fully seen and loved, bring your needs for mercy to Mary, then to Jesus, and then to God. As you talk to each one of them, end your conversation with the three questions St. Ignatius offers us. Listen to their response to you.

[Printable Triple Colloquy Prayer Card](#)

[Listen to this prayer as a guided audio reflection](#)



The Examen: I'm Here. Tell Me!

Imagine that Jesus stands in front of you saying tell me, **tell me** what it is that you want to say, all the things that you feel God calling you to say. [Listen to this prayer as a guided audio reflection.](#)

Presence: I'm Here.

Let go of the list of things that you have to do for the rest of the day or the things that you are holding onto from the doings of the day. Just be present to this space. Remind yourself that Jesus is here with you. Jesus is looking intimately at you and saying to you, *Tell me*. Trusting his presence here with you, ask Jesus to help you see your day as he saw it.

Gratitude: Tell Me!

Review the last twenty-four hours with Jesus. Pay attention to all that happened. Give great care and concern to every moment. Imagine Jesus looking at your day with you and inviting you to *tell me* what you are grateful for in the last twenty-four hours. Tell Jesus about the gifts of your day.

Consolation and Feelings: Tell Me!

Review your day once again with Jesus. Imagine him looking at you as you look at your day together saying, *tell me*. What are the most important emotions you have felt in the last 24 hours? Share with Jesus how you have felt this past day. Imagine Jesus asking:

- Where did you feel the fruits of the spirit?
- Where did you feel joy?
- Where did you feel a rise in love, faith, hope, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, or gentleness?

Tell me, Jesus says, where did you feel consolation?

Desolation: Tell Me!

Review your day once again with Jesus. Imagine Jesus remaining with you & inviting you to *tell me*:

- Where did you feel I was not, though I was, but where did you feel as though I was not?
- Where did you feel a rise in turmoil, restlessness, maybe even darkness in the last 24 hours?
- Where did you feel tempted to do what is not good?
- Where did you feel as though you were moving away from me?

Tell me, Jesus says, where did you feel desolation?

Looking Ahead: Tell Me!

Imagine Jesus remaining with you looking gently at you and saying *tell me*. Share with Jesus about your upcoming day. Imagine Jesus asking you:

- What is the grace you seek as you look into your next twenty-four hours?

Tell me, the grace you.

Our Father

Close with a simple Our Father, saying it deeply and in an intimate way.



Steps of an Annual Examen: Prayerfully Reviewing the Past Year

1. **Ask God to show you your year as God saw it.**
 - Ask God to open your eyes, your ears, and your heart to see what God saw.

2. **Thanksgiving.**
 - Reflect back over the past year in thanksgiving. What are you thankful for? Ask God to show you the gifts of the year. Think about the people you shared life with, the people you encountered, your old friends, new friends, your family, your work colleagues.
 - What memories of the past year are you thankful for? The simple moments? The extra special ones? Memories at home, at work, with friends and loved ones? In nature?
 - As God brings the memories to mind, offer your prayers of thanks for the gifts of your life.

3. **Presence.**
 - Again, look back over your year with God's help. Ask God to show you where you felt God's presence. Where did you experience an increase of faith, of hope, and of love this year? Where did you experience the fruits of the Holy Spirit named in [Galatians 5:22-23](#) at work in your life (love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control)?
 - What were you doing, what was happening, and who were you with when you experienced them?
 - Where did you have moments of insight and revelation from God about yourself? About God? About your relationships? About your call? About others? About the world?
 - Were there moments you were invited to feel as God might have felt? Moments of difficult consolation such as feeling sorrow or even holy anger at suffering or injustices you saw?
 - What key moments do you feel God inviting you to remember about the year?

4. **Lack of God's Presence.**
 - Look back over your year again with God's help. Ask God to show you where you struggled to name God's presence. Where did you feel a decrease of faith, of hope, of love? Where did you experience the opposite of the fruits of the Spirit as named in [Galatians 5: 19-21](#) (immorality, impurity, idolatry, sorcery, hatreds, rivalry, jealousy, outbursts of fury, acts of selfishness, dissensions, factions, occasions of envy)?
 - What were you doing, what was happening, and who were you with when experienced this?
 - Where were moments you inhibited your own growth in God due to a sinful act? Were there moments where relationships were hurt? Or actions done that hurt you? Or that hurt someone else?
 - Were there any moments where suffering, loss or sorrow became overwhelming? Or you felt a sense of hopelessness, discouragement or helplessness?
 - Where might you have experienced confusion or lack of clarity? Anxiety? Fear?
 - Whatever God stirs to your mind, talk to God about it. Ask for forgiveness, for healing, for understanding, and for light. What are you being offered in the memories the Holy Spirit stirs to mind?

5. Looking ahead to the coming year.

- Gather all that God revealed to you about what you are thankful for, where you felt God's presence, and where you struggled to name God's presence.
- Share your hopes and desires for the year ahead. Invite God to reveal to you God's hopes and dreams for you.
- Are there any actions you are being invited to take?
- Ask for the graces you seek this year.

Close with an Our Father.

[Learn more about the prayer tool of the Examen here.](#)

[Listen to this prayer as a guided audio reflection.](#)



Turn to the Scriptures: Leaning on the Promises of God

We have a Companion in Our Suffering:

- 1 John 5// *In him no darkness at all*
- Ephesians 4: 32-5:8// *You were once darkness, but now you are light*
- Psalm 27// *The Lord is my light and my salvation*
- John 1: 1-18// *I came to testify to the light*
- Colossians 1: 12-13// *Inherit light*

We Are Never Alone:

- Psalm 62// *In God alone is my soul at rest*
- Psalm 46: 10// *Be still and know that I am God*
- Ephesians 2: 12-22// *For he is our Peace*
- Psalm 63// *Our Longing for God*
- John 14: 18// *I will not leave you orphaned; promise of the Advocate, the Holy Spirit*

Jesus Invites Us into Relationship

- John 14: 4-6// *I am the way, the truth, and the life*
- John 10:1-10// *The Good Shepherd*
- John 13:15// *I have set an example that you should do as I have done*
- Ephesians 4: 32-5:8 // *Be imitators of Christ*
- Luke 9: 57-62// *Follow me*
- Ephesians 12: 1-14// *You were also chosen*
- Isaiah 6: 1-13// *Here I am, send me!*
- Matthew 12:49-50// *For whoever does the will of my heavenly Father is my brother, and sister and mother*

There is Rest for the Weary:

- Ezekiel 37: 1-14// *Valley of the Dry Bones*
- Isaiah 58: 9-11// *The Lord will guide you always and satisfy your thirst in parched places*
- Jeremiah 17: 5-8// *Blessed is the one whose hope is the Lord. He is like a tree planted beside the waters*
- Psalm 1: 1-6// *Blessed are they who hope in the Lord; He like a tree planted running water*
- Psalm 63:2-9// *For my soul is thirsting. For you my flesh is pining, like a dry, weary land without water*
- Matthew 11: 28-30// *Come to me all who are weary, and I will give you rest*
- Psalm 131// *Rest in God like a child*



Reasons for Our Hope

- Hebrews 6: 19// *We have this hope an anchor for our soul*
- Luke 17: 1-6// *The Mustard seed*
- 1 John 5 // *In him no darkness*
- Hebrews 10:19-25// *He who has made promise is trustworthy*
- Isaiah 42: 14-16// *These are my promises*
- 1 John 1: 5-2:2// *Faith is victory over world*
- Isaiah 43// *Do not fear*

We Can Find Shelter and Intimacy

- John 10:10// *Promise of Abundant Life*
- Ephesians 3:14-21// *He may fulfill us*
- Luke 1: 46-56// *Mary's soul proclaims of the goodness of the Lord*
- Luke 1: 67-80// *Zechariah's canticle of God's promises*
- Philippians 4: 4-9// *Rejoice, the Lord is near*
- Psalm 96// *Sing to the Lord a New Song*
- John 20// *Resurrection of Jesus*
- Luke 24// *Road to Emmaus*
- 1 Thessalonians 5: 16-18// *In all circumstances give thanks, for this is the will of God for you in Christ Jesus*
- Romans 15: 13//*May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing*

We Belong to Someone:

- Matthew 12:49-50// *You are my brothers and sisters*
- Galatians 3: 22-29// *Children of God in Christ Jesus... you belong to Christ*
- Psalm 100//*Know that the Lord is God whom us, to whom we belong. We are God's people*
- Hebrews 2:5-13// *Jesus, our brother*

Each of Us Has a Unique Call:

- Romans 11: 29// *The Gifts and calls from God are irrevocable*
- 1 Corinthians 12// *Different Gift*
- Romans 10: 10-17// *How beautiful feet that bring the Good News*
- Ephesians 2:1-10// *We are the handiwork of God created for good works*
- 2 Corinthians 6: 46// *We are ministers of God*
- Jeremiah 29: 11-13// *For I know plans I have for you*
- Ezekiel 37: 14// *I planted my heart within you*
- Exodus 3: 1-10// *Here I am!*
- Matthew 28: 16-20// *I make you disciples*
- John 21: 19-20// *Feed my Sheep*

We are Loved- Unconditionally:

- Psalm 139// *Psalm of God's Unconditional Love*
- Isaiah 45// *Potter and the Clay*
- Jeremiah 18// *Potter and the Clay*
- Luke 3: 21-22// *You are my beloved son in whom I am well pleased. (Jesus' baptism)*
- Isaiah 43// *You are precious to me*
- Ephesians 3: 14-21// *Grounded in love*
- 1 John 2: 3-11- *The love of God is perfected*
- John 10: 1-10// *I came that you might have life and have it more abundantly. (The Good Shepherd)*
- Matthew 6: 25-34// *Consider the sparrows*
- Hosea 11: 1-14// *Carried me through infancy*
- Psalm 103// *Psalm of God's creation*
- Luke 4// *Spirit of the Lord is upon me*
- Isaiah 49// *Does a woman forget her child? Nor will I forget you*
- Romans 8: 31-39// *The love of God*

We are Seen Fully- and Offered Mercy:

- Psalm 136// *His love and mercy endure forever*
- Luke 13:10-17// *Healing of the woman crippled for 18 years*
- Mark 2: 2-9// *Healing of the paralyzed man on the mat*
- John 5: 1-18// *Do you want to be made well?*
- Mark 3: 1-6// *Healing of the man with the withered hand*
- Deuteronomy 30:15-20// *Choose life or death*
- John 20// *Doubting Thomas*
- Psalm 23// *The Lord is my Shepherd*
- Revelation 21: 1-7// *New Heaven and New Earth*
- Matthew 26: 6-13// *Woman and alabaster jar*
- Psalm 32// *David's psalm of remission*
- John 4: 4-42// *Woman at well*
- Mark 10: 46-52// *Blind man on road to Jericho*
- Mark 4: 25-34// *Hemorrhaging woman*

Prayers for Support

Do Not Fear: Prayer by St Francis de Sales

Do not look forward in fear to the changes in life;
rather, look to them with full hope that as they arise,
God, whose very own you are, will lead you safely through all things; and when you cannot
stand it, God will carry you in His arms.

Do not fear what may happen tomorrow; the same understanding Father who cares for you
today will take care of you then and every day.

He will either shield you from suffering or will give you unfailing strength to bear it. Be at
peace, and put aside all anxious thoughts and imaginations.

Prayer by St Ignatius Loyola

O Christ Jesus,
when all is darkness
and we feel our weakness and helplessness,
give us the sense of Your presence,
Your love, and Your strength.
Help us to have perfect trust
in Your protecting love
and strengthening power,
so that nothing may frighten or worry us,
for, living close to You,
we shall see Your hand,
Your purpose, Your will through all things.

Prayer by St. Oscar Romero

I can't.
You must.
I'm yours.
Show me the way.

