

DAISIES FROM DYMIPHINA

A Novena for Mental Health
Awareness Month



THECHIARACOLLECTIVE.ORG

MEET ST. DYMPHNA AND CREATE A DIGITAL PRAYER GARDEN WITH THE CHIARA COLLECTIVE!

Saint Dymphna was a 7th-century Irish virgin martyr, revered as the patron saint of mental illness, epilepsy, and victims of incest.

Early Life

Saint Dymphna was born in Ireland in the 7th century to a pagan father, King Damon of Oriel, and a devout Christian mother. Her mother secretly baptized her and raised her in the Christian faith, instilling a deep devotion to God. At the age of fourteen, Dymphna consecrated herself to Christ and took a vow of chastity, dedicating her life to God. Shortly afterward, her mother passed away, which deeply affected her father and led to a deterioration of his mental health.

Flight and Martyrdom

After her mother's death, Dymphna's father, driven by grief and madness, sought to marry a woman resembling his late wife. When no suitable woman could be found, he proposed marriage to Dymphna herself. To escape this incestuous plan, Dymphna fled Ireland with her confessor, Father Gerebernus, and a few companions, eventually settling in Geel, Belgium. There, she lived a life of piety and reportedly established a hospital for the poor and sick. Her father pursued her to Geel, and when she refused to return, he ordered her execution. Dymphna and Gerebernus were both beheaded, making her a martyr at around fifteen years of age.

Patronage and Legacy

Saint Dymphna is venerated as the patron saint of mental illness, epilepsy, anxiety, emotional distress, and victims of sexual abuse. Her feast day is celebrated on May 15. Devotion to her inspired a unique, community-centered approach to mental health care in Geel, Belgium, where her shrine became a place of pilgrimage. The US National Shrine of St. Dymphna is located in Massillon, Ohio, and her intercession continues to be sought by those struggling with mental health challenges.

Saint Dymphna's life, though largely preserved through oral tradition and 13th-century hagiographies, continues to inspire devotion and hope for those facing mental and emotional challenges.

DAY ONE: FORGET-ME-NOTS



Verse of the Day:

“The Lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit.” - Psalm 34:18



Reflection:

St. Dymphna knew what it felt like to carry pain silently. Many young women today quietly battle anxiety, depression, intrusive thoughts, burnout, loneliness, bipolar disorder, OCD, eating disorders, grief, or emotional exhaustion while still trying to appear “fine.” Social media filters pain into something aesthetic, but God sees beyond appearances. He notices the tears cried in parked cars, the panic attacks hidden in bathrooms, the numbness masked by productivity, and the exhaustion behind forced smiles.

Mental struggles are not moral failure. Emotional suffering is not weakness. You are not less lovable because your mind feels heavy.

St. Dymphna reminds us that holiness does not require pretending we are okay. It requires allowing God to meet us honestly.



Prayer Intention:

Pray for the grace to stop hiding your pain from God.



Day One Prayer:

St. Dymphna, gentle friend of the suffering, help me believe that God sees my hidden battles and remains near to me in love. Amen.

DAY TWO: TULIPS



Verse of the Day:

“I have called you by name, you are mine.” — Isaiah 43:1



Reflection:

Mental illness can sometimes feel like it consumes identity. But St. Dymphna’s identity was never rooted in her suffering. It was rooted in belonging to Christ.

You are a daughter of God before anything else. God calls you beloved even on days when your thoughts are chaotic, and your heart feels tired.



Prayer Intention:

Pray for healing from false identities rooted in shame.



Day Two Prayer:

St. Dymphna, help me remember that my worth is found in Christ and not in the struggles I carry. Amen.

DAY THREE: ROSES



Verse of the Day:

“Come to me, all you who labor and are burdened, and I will give you rest.” — Matthew 11:28



Reflection:

There is pressure to succeed professionally, maintain relationships, look beautiful, stay productive, remain spiritually perfect, answer every text, maintain routines, and still somehow rest gracefully.

St. Dymphna’s story reminds us that fleeing into silence and refuge is sometimes necessary. Rest is not laziness. It is stewardship of the soul.

Jesus Himself rested. So may you.



Prayer Intention:

Pray for freedom from toxic productivity and burnout.



Day Three Prayer:

St. Dymphna, teach me that rest is not weakness but an act of trust in God's care. Amen.

DAY FOUR: MAGNOLIA



Verse of the Day:

“Come to me, all you who labor and are burdened, and I will give you rest.” — Matthew 11:28



Reflection:

There is pressure to succeed professionally, maintain relationships, look beautiful, stay productive, remain spiritually perfect, answer every text, maintain routines, and still somehow rest gracefully.

St. Dymphna's story reminds us that fleeing into silence and refuge is sometimes necessary. Rest is not laziness. It is stewardship of the soul.

Jesus Himself rested. So may you.



Prayer Intention:

Pray for freedom from toxic productivity and burnout.



Day Four Prayer:

St. Dymphna, teach me that rest is not weakness but an act of trust in God's care. Amen.

DAY FIVE: PEONY



Verse of the Day:

“See what love the Father has bestowed on us that we may be called the children of God.” — 1 John 3:1



Reflection:

Mental illness often distorts relationships. Many women begin believing they are lovable only when useful, easygoing, attractive, emotionally stable, or endlessly accommodating.

But God's love is not performance-based.

St. Dymphna rejected the unhealthy and distorted “love” demanded of her because she understood that authentic love never destroys dignity.

God's love remains steady even when emotions fluctuate wildly. He does not withdraw affection when you struggle.



Prayer Intention:

Pray for healing from unhealthy attachment, shame, and fear of abandonment.



Day Five Prayer:

St. Dymphna, help me receive God's love without fear and recognize my dignity as His daughter. Amen.

DAY SIX: SUNFLOWER



Verse of the Day:

"We are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses." —
Hebrews 12:1



Reflection:

Sometimes mental illness can feel isolating, especially in Christian spaces where everyone else seems joyful and composed.

But Heaven is filled with saints who suffered emotion

- St. Dymphna experienced fear and trauma.
- St. Elijah begged God to let him die.
- St. Therese battled spiritual darkness.
- St. Jane Frances de Chantal struggled with grief and anxiety.
- St. Benedict Joseph Labre lived misunderstood and mentally afflicted.

You are not spiritually defective because suffering exists in your life.

The saints are not distant perfectionists. They are companions who walked through darkness and still chose God.



Prayer Intention:

Pray for companionship in loneliness and suffering.



Day Six Prayer:

St. Dymphna, remind me that I am never abandoned and that the saints walk beside me in my suffering. Amen.

DAY SEVEN: LILY



Verse of the Day:

“A bruised reed He shall not break.” — Isaiah 42:3



Reflection:

Jesus approaches suffering gently. He is patient with slow healing, emotional setbacks, and imperfect recovery.

St. Dymphna’s witness reminds us that God’s strength often appears in quiet endurance rather than dramatic victories.

Healing is rarely linear. Grace still exists in the messy middle.



Prayer Intention:

Pray for self-compassion and patience during healing.



Day Seven Prayer:

St. Dymphna, teach me to see myself with the gentleness and mercy of Christ. Amen.

DAY EIGHT: HYDRANGEA



Verse of the Day:

“Hope does not disappoint.” — Romans 5:5



Reflection:

Mental illness often whispers hopelessness. But hopelessness is not the voice of God.

St. Dymphna’s life ended in martyrdom, but her story did not end in darkness. Centuries later, countless people still encounter healing through her intercession.

God specializes in resurrection.



Prayer Intention:

Pray for renewed hope and trust in God’s future.



Day Eight Prayer:

St. Dymphna, help me cling to hope even when healing feels far away. Amen.

DAY NINE: WILDFLOWER



Verse of the Day:

“Consider how the wildflowers grow.” — Luke 12:27



Reflection:

Daisies bloom quietly. They are not flashy flowers, but they persist. They grow through sidewalks, fields, storms, and difficult soil.

So did St. Dymphna. And so can you.

Mental health struggles may always be part of your story, but they are not the end of it. God can still create beauty, tenderness, vocation, friendship, creativity, love, and holiness within your life.



Prayer Intention:

Pray for the courage to live fully and faithfully despite suffering



Final Prayer:

St. Dymphna, patron saint of emotional healing and protector of the suffering, walk beside me through every season. Help me remember that Christ remains close to me always. Teach me to bloom with quiet courage, trusting that God still creates beauty within broken places. Amen.

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