

St. Louis Martin Novena: For depression, anxiety and mental disorders



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Louis Martin in his wheelchair in the garden of 7 Rue Labbey, Lisieux. From left, Celine; the Le Juifs, a couple who worked for the Martins here; and Leonie.

Thomas L. McDonald | Nov 09, 2017

Perhaps due to strokes, the father of St. Therese suffered from a decline in mental state in his later life.

Sts. Louis and Zelig Martin maintained a faith-filled household of love and joy, raising five daughters who became nuns, among them St. Therese of Lisieux. Zelig died of breast cancer at age 45, leaving Louis with five

daughters aged 4 to 17. He created an ordered and stable life for them, filled with games, prayer, and spiritual reading. In time, though, his mental state began to decline, perhaps caused by strokes, and he would display erratic behavior, sometimes disappearing for days.

His strange behavior and wandering became a problem for the family, ultimately leading them to institutionalize him in Caen, where the Daughters of the Good Savior operated a psychiatric hospital.

Louis and his family met the challenge with faith, believing this was a trial sent to purify them. In a moment of clarity, Louis told a doctor, "I know why the Good God has given me this trial: I have never had any humiliations in my life, and I need to have some."

Of this time, St. Therese would write,

In Heaven, we shall enjoy dwelling on these dark days of exile. Yet the three years of my Father's martyrdom seem to me the sweetest and most fruitful of our lives. I would not exchange them for the most sublime ecstasies, and my heart cries out in gratitude for such a priceless treasure: "We have rejoiced for the days wherein Thou hast afflicted us." Precious and sweet was this bitter cross, and our hearts only breathed out sighs of grateful love. We no longer walked—we ran, we flew along the path of perfection.

Day 1

St. Louis, you knew great happiness and deep despair, and in both you remained strong in faith. Help us to keep God in sight through our trials, even when we cry out with the Psalmist:

How long, O Lord?

Wilt thou forget me for ever?

How long wilt thou hide thy face from me?

How long must I bear pain in my soul,
and have sorrow in my heart all the day?

How long shall my enemy be exalted over me? (Psalm 13)

O Lord, through the intervention of St. Louis Martin, lift up those who are suffering from depression, anxiety, dementia, and other mental problems and lead them out of the darkness and into Your light.

Our Father

Hail Mary

Glory Be

Amen

Day 2

St. Louis, along with Zelig you filled your household with such love that it produced saints, but even great piety does not spare us from loss and the sadness that accompanies it. With those who mourn and grieve, we say:

My soul melts away for sorrow; strengthen me according to your word!
(Psalm 119)

O Lord, through the intervention of St. Louis Martin, lift up those who are suffering from depression, anxiety, dementia, and other mental problems and lead them out of the darkness and into Your light.

Our Father

Hail Mary

Glory Be

Amen

Day 3

St. Louis, you knew the challenge of a disordered mind. Carry our prayers to our Father in heaven that we may have peace in our hearts and in our lives.

You are my hiding place; you will protect me from trouble and surround me with songs of deliverance. (Psalm 32)

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Our Father

Hail Mary

Glory Be

Amen

Day 4

St. Louis, your daughter Therese suffered a period of deep depression and loss of faith, even contemplating suicide, yet you remained strong for her. May we be there for others even in our own trials.

Turn your ear to me, come quickly to my rescue; be my rock of refuge, a strong fortress to save me. (Psalm 31)

O Lord, through the intervention of St. Louis Martin, lift up those who are suffering from depression, anxiety, dementia, and other mental problems and lead them out of the darkness and into Your light.

Our Father

Hail Mary

Glory Be

Amen

Day 5

St. Louis, may those around us remember what your daughter St. Therese wrote: "A word or a smile is often enough to put fresh life in a despondent soul." Give strength to the loved ones and caregivers of those who struggle with mental problems.

Why are you cast down, O my soul,
and why are you disquieted within me?
Hope in God; for I shall again praise him,
my help and my God. (Psalm 42)

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Our Father
Hail Mary
Glory Be
Amen

Day 6

St. Louis, like you, may we unite our suffering to that of Christ, and be close to Him as we carry our own crosses.

The Lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit. (Psalm 34)

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Our Father

Hail Mary

Glory Be

Amen

Day 7

St. Louis, your family, fiends, and caretakers gave you support and loving kindness through your illness. Help those around us — strangers and friends — to open their eyes to those suffering mental anguish and reach out with the love of good Samaritan to bind their wounds and lift them up.

I am bowed and brought to my knees.
I go mourning all the day long.
Spent and utterly crushed,
I cry aloud in anguish of heart.
O Lord, do not forsake me!
My God, do not stay far off!
Make haste and come to help,
O Lord, my God, my savior! (Psalm 38)

O Lord, through the intervention of St. Louis Martin, lift up those who are suffering from depression, anxiety, dementia, and other mental problems and lead them out of the darkness and into Your light.

Our Father
Hail Mary
Glory Be
Amen

Day 8

St. Louis, you trusted in the Lord although it must have seemed at times that He was silent in the face of your trials. May we always trust that the God of love can never forget us, even when we feel most forgotten.

But I have trusted in thy steadfast love;
my heart shall rejoice in thy salvation.

I will sing to the Lord,
because he has dealt bountifully with me. (Psalm 13)

O Lord, through the intervention of St. Louis Martin, lift up those who are suffering from depression and lead them out of the darkness and into Your light.

Our Father

Hail Mary

Glory Be

Amen

Day 9

St. Louis, pray for us, and for all those who suffer depression, mental illness, and anxiety, as well as for those who care for them.

I will heal my people and lead them;
I will give full comfort
To them and to those who mourn for them,
I, the Creator, who gave them life.
Peace, peace to the far and the near,
Says the Lord;
And I will heal them. (Isaiah 57)

O Lord, through the intervention of St. Louis Martin, lift up those who are suffering from depression, anxiety, dementia, and other mental problems and lead them out of the darkness and into Your light.

Our Father
Hail Mary
Glory Be
Amen

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