

ROBBED BY MENTAL ILLNESS,  
DISCARDED BY SOCIETY..  
WHO WILL BE MY NEIGHBOR?

CATHOLIC PROFESSIONALS' BREAKFAST

SANTA CLARA CA

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- The real voyage of discovery consists not in seeing new lands, but in seeing with new eyes." Proust

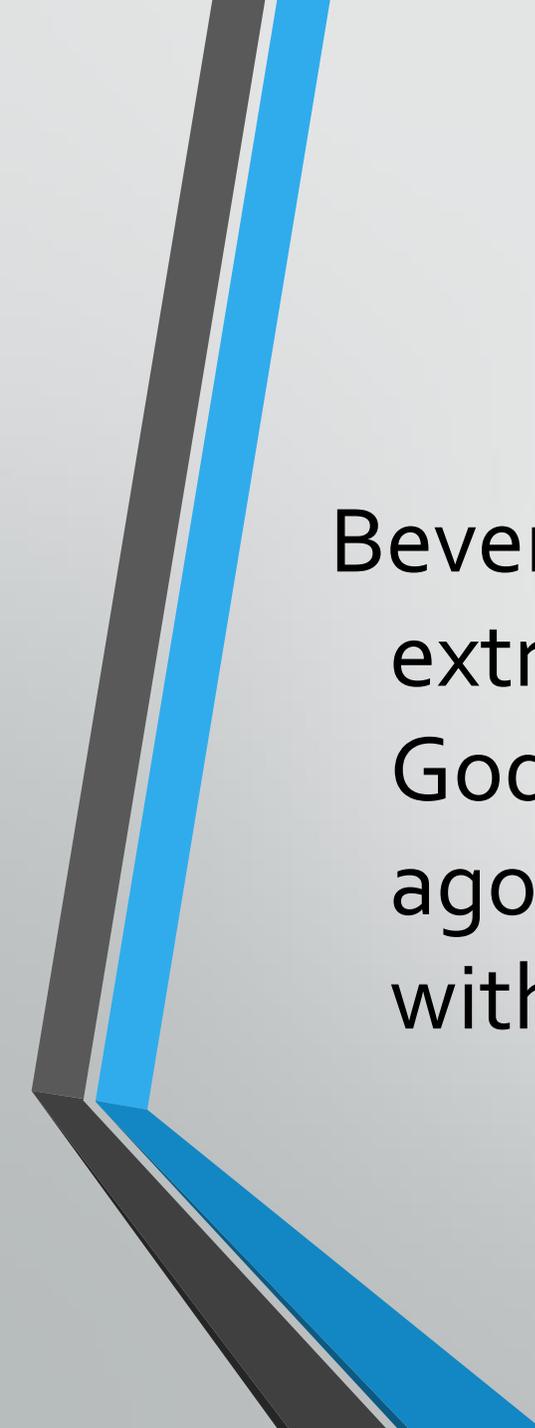
A hand is shown reaching upwards against a background of warm, orange and yellow tones. The background is filled with numerous question marks of varying sizes and colors (red, orange, yellow). A large, red, hand-shaped graphic is positioned behind the text. The overall composition suggests a theme of inquiry and listening.

**GOT  
QUESTIONS?**

**...WE HEAR YOU**

# The Road Less Traveled





Beverly – “over and over again, in moments of extreme darkness and despair, I had a sense that God was there for me, sometimes turning my agony into joy... this enabled me to continue on with the struggle and terror.”

# Definitions of Mental Illness

- Schizophrenia
- Bi-polar
- Depression
- Schizoaffective
- PTSD
- Personality disorders



What is the experience of mental illness?



People are more than their illness  
– whether that is cancer, heart  
disease, diabetes or mental illness.



## Statistics in Santa Clara

- 3% of population suffers with some mental illness
- 40-50% of inmates in jails and prisons suffer with some mental illness or addiction or both
- Santa Clara – 26 psychiatrists for every 100,000 people.
- San Bernadino – 10.7 psychiatrists for every 100,000
- Nation wide the statistics are 1 out of four-five

# Mental Illness: The Great Robber

- STIGMA
- Sense of isolation
- Hopelessness
- Poor self-esteem
- Loss of meaning and purpose
- Affects work, relationships

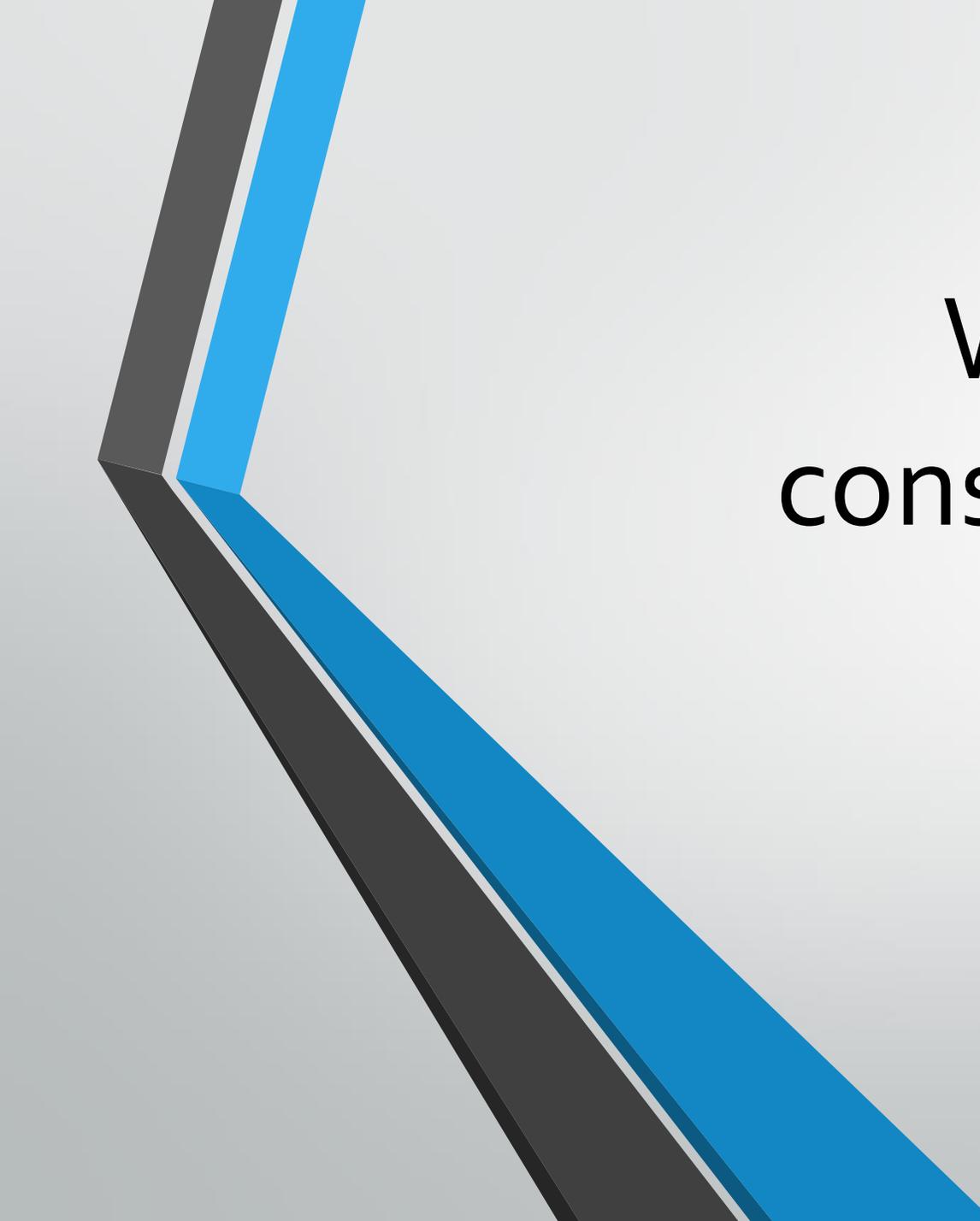


# The family is also robbed



# Discarded by Society





Why is it important to  
consider mental illness in  
faith community?

# Religio.... To bind back to

- In experience of isolation.... create community
- In face of hopelessness.... offer hope
- In face of stigma, shame... offer acceptance
- In face of poor self-esteem... offer self-worth
- In face of loss of meaning... offer meaning, purpose

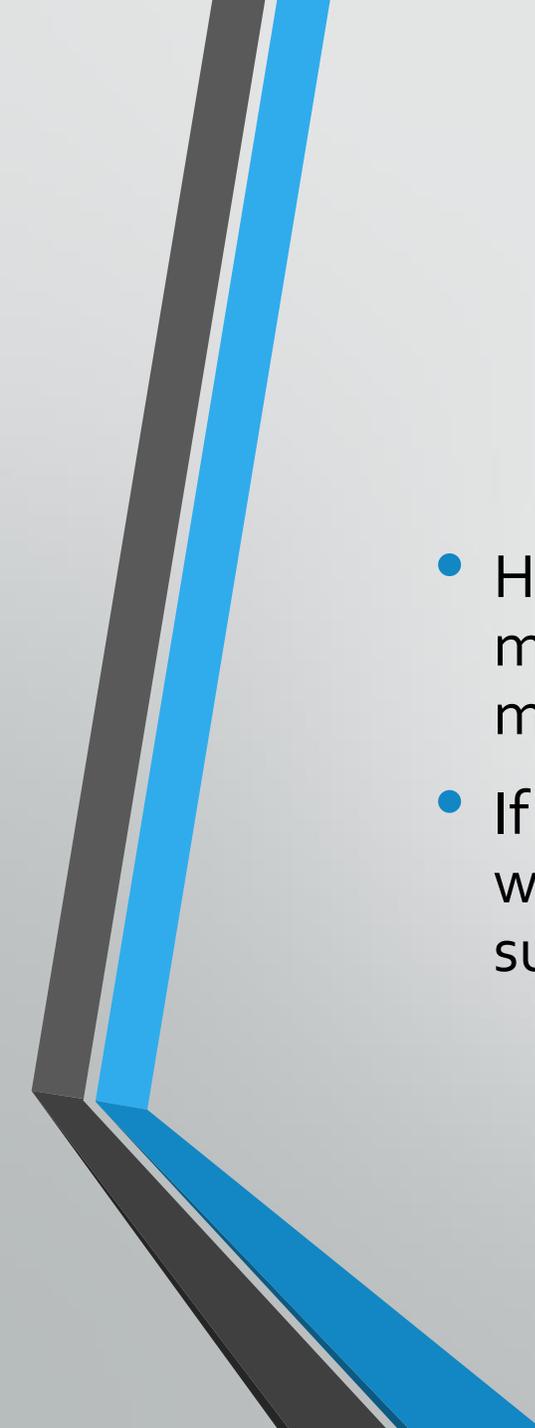
# This is what Yahweh asks of you...

- To act justly
- To love tenderly
- To walk humbly with your God



# Point of Departure

- Identifying our own prejudice and stereotypes
- Coming forward with the truth about ourselves or in our families
- Initiating some conversation in our parish
- Creating a group
- Being attentive to legislation that impacts mental health services

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- How does your faith community reach out to, include in ministry, visit in hospitals or prisons those who suffer with mental illness or their families?
  - If your religious community has a peace and justice group, to what extent does it address the justice/injustice of those who suffer with mental illness?

## Networking

“Life constricts or expands in relation to one’s courage.” Anais Nin

