

Op-Ed for Clergy Care Collective

Title: Prophets Need Rest Too: Dignifying the Mental Health of Ministers

By Rev. Matthew González, J.D. July 3, 2025.

When we picture a prophet, we often imagine fire: a voice crying in the wilderness, denouncing injustice, rallying the weary faithful. But every prophet—every minister, priest, deacon, or seminarian—is also human. And humans burn out. They bleed. They break.

At Clergy Care Collective, we believe it is not enough to ask prophets to preach if we do not also offer them peace. It is not enough to send shepherds into the valley of human suffering without tending their wounds. A Church that asks for tireless love must offer deep love in return.

I founded Clergy Care Collective because I have seen the silence around clergy mental health. I've lived it. Depression and anxiety do not respect the collar, the cassock, or the stole. And yet, we too often spiritualize away the pain of those who minister. We say, "Just pray harder," when we should be saying, "You are not alone."

That silence must end.

This nonprofit is a ministry of accompaniment. We walk with clergy through exhaustion, trauma, disability, and grief. We hold space for neurodivergent ministers. We lift up those who have felt discarded by their denomination. And we advocate—with clarity and courage—for justice in society, especially for those denied support through the cruel bureaucracy of programs like Supplemental Security Income.

Our work is rooted in the Gospel and Catholic Social Teaching, which affirms that every person bears God's image—and that the weakest among us reveal Christ most fully. Pope Francis reminds us that "no one is useless or unimportant." And yet, clergy facing mental illness are too often treated as though their pain is a liability, rather than a sacred encounter with God's mercy.

The truth is, weakness is not failure—it is Christlike. Ministry forged in suffering often produces the most compassionate shepherds.

That is why we provide not just pastoral care, but structural advocacy. It is why we honor St. Dymphna, the miracle-working patron of those with mental illness, and look to her as a model of courage and healing. It is why we consecrate our work to the Blessed Mother, who stood beside the suffering and never turned away.

Clergy Care Collective is national, ecumenical, and open-hearted. We affirm the dignity of all God's children—Black and white, gay and straight, Catholic and Protestant, neurotypical

and neurodivergent. We believe the Church can be a sanctuary not just for the laity, but for the ministers who lead them.


If you are a pastor struggling to keep going, know this: you are not weak. You are worthy. You are needed. And there is a place for you here.

If you are a seminarian wrestling with self-doubt, stigma, or fear, know this: your calling is sacred, and your vulnerability is not a disqualification—it is a gift.

And if you are a Christian who longs for a Church that nurtures rather than discards, that comforts as well as convicts, we invite you to stand with us.

We are building a movement of mercy.

Let's make room in the Church for wounded healers. Let's treat our prophets not as tools, but as treasures. Let's remember: even Christ needed rest.

 To learn more, support our work, or request an interview, visit:
www.clergycairecollective.org