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**For Immediate Release**  
**September 15, 2021**

The New Jersey Catholic Bishops issued a provincial statement today recognizing September as “National Recovery Month.” In the statement, the bishops celebrate those who have achieved recovery and announce the release of new resources to help parishes and other Catholic organizations that seek to serve those who continue to suffer from various forms of addiction.

“September is National Recovery Month, a time during which we celebrate those who have achieved recovery and continue our support of those still working toward it. During this time, we, the Catholic Bishops of New Jersey, are renewing our commitment to helping those suffering from various forms of addiction and we are calling on all Catholics and people of good will to join us in praying for, supporting, and encouraging those working toward recovery.”

According to the New Jersey Department of Human Services, almost 100,000 individuals sought treatment for various forms of substance abuse in 2019. But, unfortunately, countless others continue to struggle with addiction, too often believing they are alone and “unworthy” of help.

To support those who struggle with addiction, the bishops state, “The Catholic Church in New Jersey is committed to removing this stigma. Every day, our Catholic Charities agencies and various social service programs do tremendous work providing comprehensive addiction services. These efforts are rooted in the belief that all people are created in the image and likeness of God and deserving of a better life filled with His love.”

The bishops recognize that Catholic parishes are often the first to encounter people who seek assistance. Many parishes have already established addiction ministry programs and many more desire to start similar programs. Unfortunately, due to the complexities of addiction, some parishes lack the resources or are unaware of how to help.

“To assist parish communities, a group of multi-diocesan representatives - individuals with expertise in addiction/recovery ministry, parish life, and public policy - have developed resources to help parishes respond pastorally to the spiritual needs of those suffering. These resources provide ideas and information on building awareness as well as addiction and recovery ministries in parishes wherever they may be located throughout the state.”

The hope is that these resources can aid parishes that want to respond to those struggling with addiction.

In conclusion, the bishops state, “Entrusted to the intercession of our Blessed Mother and Saint Maximilian Kolbe, patron of those suffering from addiction, we hope these resources will enable each parish to provide much-needed assistance and loving accompaniment to individuals and families.”

To read the full statement and to access these resources, go to <https://njcatholic.org/substance-abuse>.

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