

# St. Dymphna

**Patron of the  
Nervous and Emotionally Disturbed**

15¢



**Divine Word Publications**



Digitized by the Internet Archive  
in 2016

# **Saint Dymphna**

**Patron of the Nervous and  
Emotionally Disturbed**

By

REV. LAWRENCE G. LOVASIK, S.V.D.  
Divine Word Missionary

*Sixth Printing  
100th Thousand*

1961

DIVINE WORD PUBLICATIONS  
TECHNY, ILLINOIS

## FOREWORD

The most serious medical problem facing our nation is that presented by nervous and mental diseases. About eight million persons are thus afflicted. One out of every twenty persons in the United States is emotionally or mentally maladjusted and needs treatment for some personality disorder. More than half the patients who visit their family doctor for some physical ailment are really suffering from some type of emotional disorder. *Nervous and mental disease takes a larger toll than do cancer, infantile paralysis, and tuberculosis combined.* More than half of all the hospital beds in this country are occupied by mental patients.

These are startling facts and present the reason for the need of this booklet. We need a patron for people suffering from nervous and mental diseases. There is such a patron but not many people in the United States have even heard of her. She is Saint Dymphna. These pages will tell her story.

May devotion to Saint Dymphna (pronounced: dímf-na) become a source of hope not only for those suffering from mental and nervous illness, but also for those whose friends and loved ones are so afflicted. May Our Lady, Health of the Sick and Comforter of the Afflicted, bring this message where it is needed most.

*Father Lawrence G. Lovasik, S.V.D.*

Divine Word Seminary  
Girard, Pennsylvania

## I. SAINT FOR THE AFFLICTED

### *Virgin and Martyr*

Catholics for the most part are entirely unfamiliar with many of the glorious saints of Ireland. One such forgotten or unknown saint, who, on account of her spotless virtue and glorious martyrdom, is sometimes referred to as the "Lily of Eire," is St. Dymphna.

Many details of the life of St. Dymphna are lacking, but the outstanding facts of her short life, as well as the many miracles worked through her intercession after her death, are well known. Her life was written by a certain Peter, a Canon Regular of St. Autbert's Church in Cambray, France, in 1680. Other writers before him have written about her and entertained almost tender devotion toward her.

Dymphna was born in the seventh century, when Ireland was almost universally Catholic. Yet, strange to say, her father, Damon, a petty king or chieftain of Oriel, was a pagan. He was a man of great wealth and power, acquired by his success in many wars. Her mother was also of noble descent, exceptionally beautiful, and a devout Christian. Dymphna herself is said to have borne a striking resemblance to her mother and to have inherited both her beauty and charm of disposition. She was a most sweet and winsome child. Every affection and attention was lavished on her from birth. Heaven, too, favored her with special graces.

Dymphna was fourteen when tragedy struck the household. Her mother died and her father is said to have been afflicted with a mental illness, brought on by his grief. The girl was entrusted to the care of a devout Christian woman, who prepared her for Baptism. Father Gerebran, an old and venerable priest, baptized her. He was evidently a member of the household and later taught Dymphna her letters along with the truths of religion. A bright and eager pupil, she advanced rapidly in wisdom and grace. When still very young, Dymphna, like so many other noble Irish maidens before and after her, being filled with a deep love for Jesus Christ, chose Him for her Divine Spouse and consecrated her virginity to Him and to His Blessed Mother by a vow of chastity.

In a frantic effort to fill the void in his life caused by the death of his wife, Dymphna's father sent messengers throughout his own and other lands to find some woman of noble birth, resembling his beloved wife, who would be willing to marry him. Their search was fruitless. Very likely filled with fear of punishments, they proposed another plan. They directed the king's attention to the remarkable resemblance between Dymphna and her mother, both in physical beauty and charm of disposition, and suggested that he propose marriage to her.

Under the stress of mental illness and passion, the king was willing to follow this

scandalous proposal. He tried to persuade Dymphna by promises of riches and flattering words. But she was filled with disgust by the persistent advances of her father, not only because she saw the evil of such a marriage, but also because she had already dedicated herself to a life of virginity and would have rejected marriage under any circumstances.

Dymphna laid the matter before Father Gerebran and upon his advice decided to flee from her homeland. He himself agreed to accompany her, together with two other friends, the court jester and his wife. The little group hurried to the coast. Faithful vassals rowed them across the mist-laden North Sea. They landed upon the Belgian coast near Antwerp. Fleeing inland, the fugitives made their way to Gelium — now Gheel — where hospitable villagers received the Celtic strangers into their homes. They found here a chapel dedicated to St. Martin of Tours, and decided to make their home near it. Dymphna soon made herself beloved by her tender care of the sick and poor.

Damon, very angry at the disappearance of his daughter, immediately set out in search of the fugitives. They were eventually traced to Belgium. When Dymphna's father tried to persuade her to return with him, Father Gerebran rebuked him for his wicked proposal. In order to break down her resistance, the king gave orders that Father Gerebran should be put to death. Without delay, his wicked retainers laid violent hands upon

the priest. With one blow of a sword his head was severed from his shoulders.

The death of her beloved spiritual guide only confirmed Dymphna's resolution to resist unto blood, if needs be, herself. Her father again tried to persuade her to return to Ireland with him. This time she not only refused but even scorned his cruel threats. Infuriated by her resistance, he drew his sword and struck off the head of his daughter. She was then only fifteen years of age. Dymphna received the crown of martyrdom between the years 620 and 640.

The records of Dymphna's life and death say that the bodies of the two martyrs lay on the ground for quite some time before the inhabitants of Gheel removed them to a cave. Some years later a more suitable burial place was sought. When the workmen, assigned to the task, entered the cave and cleared away the rubble, they discovered two beautifully sculptured tombs of pure white stone. They opened Dymphna's coffin and found lying over her breast a red tile bearing the inscription: "Here lies the body of the holy virgin and martyr, Dymphna." Her remains were placed in a small church of the town and kept there for many years.

#### *Patroness of Nervous and Mental Patients*

Dymphna died to save her virginity from a violently insane father. Her martyrdom bears a striking resemblance to that of St. Maria Goretti in our own century. So deep was the love of Dymphna for her unfor-



fortunate parent that she has spent her time in heaven curing mentally ill people. She has for this reason rightly deserved the title of the patron saint of those suffering from nervous ailments and mental afflictions.

The devout Catholic villagers of Gheel diagnosed the unnatural father as insane while they labelled Dymphna "Saint" and erected a shrine over her remains. The relics of her body were placed in a golden reliquary and transferred to the magnificent church of St. Dymphna, which was built upon the site of the original burial place. Many miracles began to occur at her shrine. On one occasion a violently insane person was brought to the church and blessed with Dymphna's relics and was instantly cured. Novenas and applications of her relics brought about many other reported cures. These devotions and wonders continue to this day. Then began those strange pilgrimages of the deranged to pray at Dymphna's shrine. When they brought their delusions and obsessions to be laid at the tomb of the martyred virgin, they were tenderly cared for by the hospitable villagers. Many of the pilgrims recovered their mental health, as is attested by the ancient records of the community which are still preserved.

This good work had been going on for many years when William, Bishop of Cambray, in 1247, caused an investigation of these remarkable cures. This resulted in the founding of the Infirmary of St. Elizabeth at Gheel, an institution in charge of the

nuns of St. Augustine, who were brought from Mechlin, a city in north central Belgium. The Infirmary served as a place to care for mentally afflicted persons during their stay in Gheel.

Pilgrimages continued throughout the Middle Ages. Gradually it became an established custom for the pilgrims to remain in village homes while awaiting recovery. The villagers, who seemed to have a sixth sense in handling their strange guests, accepted their vocation as a religious duty.

Canon Peter states in his history of St. Dymphna's life: "We can hardly question the efficacy of her intercession being manifested by signs and wonders, frequently wrought among the people who had selected her as their special patroness."

In 1316 Pope John XXII, in 1410 Pope John XXIII, and in 1431 Pope Eugenius IV testified in Apostolic Documents to the miracles worked through the intercession of Dymphna. She was canonized a saint and May 15 was set as her feast in commemoration of the day on which she was martyred. Her feastday is a national holiday in Belgium and is celebrated with great festivity.

Thus Sovereign Pontiffs and the Bishops have always shown their veneration for St. Dymphna and have favored with indulgences the church which is built over the saint's tomb — the tomb which God has favored with so many miracles wrought through her intercession. The afflicted and their friends who have invoked the name

of St. Dymphna have not found her wanting. Since she resisted courageously the insane, raging love of her father God has made her the special protectress of all who are afflicted with nervous and mental disorders, and many miraculous cures at Gheel have established her in that title.

In 1636 Pope Urban VIII blessed and indulgenced the reestablished Confraternity of St. Dymphna, which exists today. Knowing of what had been done by the Confraternity of St. Dymphna through the centuries, the late Archbishop John T. McNicholas, of Cincinnati, Ohio, considered it an ideal Confraternity to take over the apostolate of the nervous and insane in our own country. On June 23, 1940, a chapel to St. Dymphna was dedicated on the Longview Hospital grounds, Cincinnati, and a League in her honor which offers many spiritual benefits has been established by the Archbishop. Dues paid by the members of the League of St. Dymphna are used by the director to provide Catholic books and reading material for the patients, and to provide reading glasses, hearing aids and dentures, which are not provided by the state. Some of the funds have also been used to decorate the chapel of St. Dymphna on the hospital grounds. The Confraternity has not done what the Archbishop had hoped for it, but the 1,500 members who have joined have illustrated what can be accomplished when lay apostles set their minds to help the most unfortunate people among us — the men-

tally ill. Further information about the League of St. Dymphna, as well as pictures and medals, may be obtained from: *St. Dymphna Chapel, Longview Hospital, Cincinnati 16, Ohio.*

In state hospitals for mentally ill throughout the United States and Canada many perpetual Novenas (all well attended) are going on. Very interesting cases can be reported, in which the prayers have been answered and restoration to normal health achieved. All this is a manifestation of the miraculous mercy of God through the intercession of St. Dymphna. Devotion to this saint is spreading very rapidly. We of this day especially have great need of the intercession of St. Dymphna.

### *The Gheel Plan*

The spot on which St. Dymphna died at Gheel, Belgium, now houses one of the greatest (if not the greatest) medical centers in the world for care and treatment of mentally sick people. Since the thirteenth century it has been their haven of refuge. The population of the town today is only about 18,000, of which about 3,000 are patients. A goodly number of these, if not an actual majority, are being cared for in the homes of the townspeople themselves.

The pilgrimages to the Shrine of St. Dymphna began in the seventh century and continued throughout the Middle Ages. For generations it has come to be recognized as a sign of good standing in the community

to have, or have had patients in one's home. Nearly all the inhabitants of the town of Gheel are members of St. Dymphna's League and as such do all they can to assist in the cure of the patients. Religious orders established guest houses at Gheel for the deranged pilgrims; the city councilors erected comfortable brick cottages for the disturbed and the indigent. Thus began that intelligent and benevolent interest in the care of the mentally sick which continues to this day and has culminated in the famous Belgian Family Care Colonies, the great contribution made by Catholicism to psychiatry, which is now being practiced in all major European countries and in North and South America. Belgium has 4 State Colonies, with 5,000 patients.

For centuries the treatment of the mentally afflicted has been directed almost entirely by the Church, because of the traditional origin and early development of the Colony on a religious basis. Since 1852, with the large increase in the number of patients, the Colonies have been operated by the Belgian government, with a full corps of psychiatrists and registered nurses to supervise the carefully selected foster-families and their "guests." But the hardest job has fallen to the religious orders. They operate 47 small closed hospitals, with from 50 to 800 beds each. These accept only the acutely ill and deteriorated, who comprise 80% of the total mentally ill population. But even here the Catholic spirit is visible.

Instead of the bare, stiff, official atmosphere and impersonalized care of the American state hospital, Belgian religious organize and furnish their hospitals to resemble the Flemish middle-class home. The home atmosphere, replete with pictures and flowers, provides continuity for the life-experiences of the patient and minimizes the accent on illness.

As the acutely ill improve, they are transferred to one of the State Colonies to be placed with foster-families and gradually oriented to normal social and economic life. The Catholic element of charity is in the marked cordiality existing between social worker, patients, and foster-parents. Religious orders also maintain "open hospitals," or psychopathic institutes, where persons who realize they are mentally slipping may voluntarily apply for psychiatric treatment without the emotional scare of legal commitment. There is also a network of mental hygiene clinics which cover the country, where the mildly affected may obtain treatments without leaving their homes. Five welfare agencies co-operate with the government in setting up rehabilitation centers, where recovered patients may get help in making a stable comeback.

We are obliged to admit the spiritual element in these recoveries for which Gheel is famous: faith and hope are aroused within demented minds: and charity, which inspires the hospitality of the devout people of Gheel, makes them discern the dignity of

the human person behind the distorted mask of madness. And all this began in an era when, elsewhere in Europe, the insane were driven out to beg, chained in cages, or exhibited at fairs, as curiosities.

And today, while the great nations, our own in particular, stand red-faced and self-accused before the bar of public opinion, and admit their neglect of the mentally ill, little Belgium has gone quietly on her way perfecting her Catholic — and common-sense — system for the prevention and treatment of mental ills. So efficacious is the Catholic method that, among progressive countries with modern hospital facilities, Belgium's rate for mental hospital population is the lowest in the world. In the treatment of mentally ill the Catholics in Belgium have been over 1,000 years ahead of the times, and the so-called "modern psychiatry" is just now catching on and up.

There is a vast difference between the "ideal" sanatoriums at Gheel, where the newest and most advanced medical methods of treatment are combined with a deep sense of religion, and our own mental institutions in this country. Gheel stands as a challenge to our American institutions for the mentally ill. We spend millions, but Gheel gets results. This could mean that it is religion rather than money that we lack.

*Our foremost medical authorities commend the Gheel plan.* Its soundness and principles are today more widely recognized than ever before. Many ranking psychiatrists

visit Gheel annually to study the methods used at St. Elizabeth Sanatorium. Writing in the *American Journal of Psychiatry* in 1936, *Dr. Kilgore* gave a glowing account of all he witnessed at Gheel, but added, "It may be impossible elsewhere to develop a system exactly as it is conducted at Gheel. The religious element which played such a big part in its early history cannot be made to order. St. Dymphnas are uncommon today."

The relation between religion and a stable mentality was expressed by *Dr. Frederic Sano*, internationally known psychiatrist, formerly director of the State Colony at Gheel, in these words: "The Belgian hospital and family care system were originally founded upon Catholic religious principles, and while I am a non-believer, yet, as a scientist, I recognize that the faith, hope and charity of religion have important therapeutic values. Moreover, religion has a social value: it salvages the derelicts of society."

The Gheel Colony's social service worker, *Mme. Borgers-Sargent*, graduate of the Antwerp School of Social Service, recently made this statement: "Our 3,000 patients live practically unrestricted lives among the 18,000 population of Gheel. They share freely in the recreation and family life of their foster-parents. The greater number are regularly employed at prevailing wages. Doctors, nurses, and social workers strive to maintain a friendly relationship with each patient which will impress upon his mind,



however temporarily unbalanced, a picture of himself as a responsible, normally functioning member of the community. This minimizes his concept of himself as a sick person, and affords him a sense of security. The Catholic treatment of mental disease, barring physical causes, lies in the Catholic thesis of the balanced life, in which the elements of the good life, work, recreation and love of God and of man, have a chance to exert their healing influence."

Mental disease is America's major disaster. It is more serious and widespread than heart disease, cancer, and polio combined. During 1950, one million six hundred thousand Americans spent some time in a mental hospital. An equal number of the mentally or emotionally unbalanced, remain at large and create uncounted domestic and social tragedies. The remedy? Adoption by each state of the major features of the Catholic Belgian pattern — features recommended by the American Psychiatric Association at their May meeting, 1946. There is here an open field for Catholic religious orders and ecclesiastical authority to help solve America's major problem along the lines of Catholic philosophy and psychiatry.

That which the Church has done at Gheel began with St. Dymphna in the dim opening years of the Middle Ages. Gheel provides another example of how the Church has stood foremost in the care of the afflicted and has always taught the necessity of religion and charity, in particular, in advancing and completing the researches of science.

## VARIOUS PRAYERS

### *Prayer for a Cure*

Dearest St. Dymphna, great wonder-worker in every affliction of mind and body, I humbly implore your powerful intercession with Jesus through Mary, the Health of the Sick.

You are filled with love and compassion for the thousands of patients brought to your shrine, and for those who cannot come to your shrine but invoke you in their own homes and in hospitals. Show the same love and compassion towards me, your faithful client. The many miracles and cures which have been wrought through your intercession give me great confidence that you will help me in my present illness (*Mention it*).

Good Saint Dymphna, the fervent faith and devotion of your many clients who are afflicted with the same illness as I am, inspires me to entrust myself to your special care. I trust in you as a child. I am absolutely confident of obtaining my urgent request, if it is for the greater glory of God and the good of my soul. As a proof of my deep gratitude, I promise to love God more, to receive Holy Communion often, and to pray faithfully, especially my rosary. For the sake of Jesus and Mary, whom you loved so earnestly, grant my prayer.

St. Dymphna, young and beautiful, innocent and pure, help me to imitate your love of purity. You chose to be martyred by

your own father's sword rather than consent to a single sin of impurity. Give me the same strength and courage in fighting off the temptations of the world, the flesh, and the devil. As you have given all the love of your heart to Jesus, your Divine Spouse, and consecrated your virginity to Him, help me to love God with my whole heart and serve Him faithfully. As you bore the persecution of your father and the sufferings of an exile so patiently, obtain for me the patience I need to accept the cross of my illness and every other trial with loving resignation to the will of God.

St. Dymphna, through your glorious martyrdom for the love of Christ, help me to be loyal to my faith and my God as long as I live. And when the hour of my own death comes, stand at my side and pray for me that I may at last merit the eternal crown of glory in God's Kingdom.

Good Saint Dymphna, I beg you to recommend my request to Mary, the Health of the Sick and Comforter of the Afflicted, that both Mary and you may present it to Jesus, the Divine Physician.

Saint Dymphna, patroness of those who suffer with nervous and mental diseases, beloved child of Jesus and Mary, pray to Them for me and obtain my request (*three times*).

In honor of Saint Dymphna: Our Father . . . Hail Mary . . . Glory be. . . . Saint Dymphna, Virgin and Martyr, pray for us.

## *Prayer to Jesus, the Divine Physician*

Jesus, Divine Physician, You have created nature and all the wondrous functions of the human body. You are the Master of Your creation. You can and do suspend the laws of nature for those who have faith in Your goodness and entreat You in fervent prayer. You promised that my prayers would be heard when You said, "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened to you. For everyone who asks, receives; and he who seeks, finds; and to him who knocks, it shall be opened" (Matt. 7, 7). You also said, "All things whatsoever you ask in prayer, believe that you shall receive, and they shall come to you" (Mark 11, 24). Full of confidence in these promises, I beg You to help me in my present affliction (*Here mention your request*).

Jesus, Divine Physician, during Your lifetime You cured sickness and disease and even raised the dead to life, because people asked You to do so in prayer. I firmly believe that You will hear my prayer also, if this should be the Will of God.

Through the intercession of St. Dymphna, who suffered martyrdom to prove her love for You and to protect her virtue of purity, I ask for the grace to understand more and more the infinite love of Your Sacred Heart for me. I firmly believe that You love me with a love that ordains all things for my own good even though this may be difficult

for my nature to bear. It is a love that turns to good all that I may at the moment consider evil. I love Your Heart that loves me so much.

Jesus, Divine Physician, I thank You for being my best Friend in my illness and my Companion in suffering; I thank You for loving me with a Heart human like my own — a Heart that can understand my sorrows and problems since It has experienced all that I must bear; a Heart that can sympathize with me and befriend me in my hour of need; a Heart that can love me with the love of the best of friends. Like a real furnace of fire Your heart burns for me with a love that knows no end because It has its source in the depths of the Godhead. It burns all for me, as if there were no others to share its infinite warmth. Not all the affection You pour out upon countless other souls lessens Your love for me. Even when I forget You and begin to complain in my illness, You pray for me. Even when I disappoint You by trying to shake off the cross You have placed upon my shoulders, You sacrifice Yourself for me at Holy Mass. When I have pain, You are ready to console and strengthen me, for Your Sacred Heart ever calls to me, "Come to Me, all you who labor and are burdened, and I will give you rest" (Matt. 11, 29). Dearest Jesus, Divine Physician, behold how I am burdened with this cross of illness. I come to You and beg You to give me rest.

Jesus, Divine Physician, help me to realize

that it is only through the cross that I can attain to glory; that it is only through suffering that I can possess the kingdom of heaven. Before Your own dear Mother was crowned Queen of heaven, she became the Mother of Sorrows. All the saints suffered during their lifetime. St. Dymphna was persecuted and finally beheaded by her own father. I, too, have been blessed with suffering. This is the only way I can follow You, for You said, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me" (Matt. 16, 24).

Jesus, Divine Physician, I unite myself with You as You offer Yourself during the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass and renew Your Sacrifice of Calvary. Give my heart sentiments like Your own, so that through frequent Holy Communion and prayer I may become holy and pleasing to God, a worthy co-victim with You, and so that all the actions, sufferings, tears, and disappointments of my life may be thus consecrated to You as a sacrifice for the glory of God. Everything that You send me, or permit in my life, whether favorable or unfavorable, sweet or bitter — even this illness which I must bear is acceptable to me, for I have resolved to conform myself to the Divine Will in all things. You invite me to do so, for You said, "Take my yoke upon you . . . My yoke is easy and My burden light" (Matt. 11, 29). May God's Will always be my will! Jesus, Divine Physician, cure me! Amen.

Our Father . . . Hail Mary . . . Glory be . . .  
Jesus, Divine Physician, have mercy on us.  
Mother of Sorrows, pray for us.  
St. Dymphna, the mental saint, pray for us.

*Prayer to Our Lady, Health of the Sick*

My dearest Mother Mary, I confidently invoke you as the Health of the Sick. You are the loving Mother especially of those who are blessed with a cross of sickness. Through the intercession of your faithful servant, St. Dymphna, whom the Church has chosen as the heavenly Patroness of those afflicted with nervous and mental disease, I humbly plead for this favor (*Mention your request*).

Mother of Perpetual Help, I beg you to present my petition to your Divine Son. If you will pray for me, I cannot be refused, for your prayers before God are all-powerful. With childlike trust I abandon myself to God's Holy Will concerning my request.

Sweet Mother of Mercy, I love you; I put all my confidence in you. I offer to God through your hands every suffering that I must bear, with all the love of my heart. Make every pain an act of love for God, an act of atonement for my sins, and meritorious for the salvation of souls, especially for my own soul. Teach me patience and resignation to the Holy Will of God, in imitation of you, dear Mother of Sorrows. ·

O my Mother, you are my hope! For the sake of your beloved Jesus, and through the intercession of St. Dymphna, whom you

loved so tenderly as to lead her to sainthood, I beg you to grant my prayer. Amen.

V. Pray for us, Our Lady, Health of the Sick,

R. That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

*Let us pray:*

Grant us, Your servants, we beg You, O Lord God, that we may be blessed with health of soul and body, and by the glorious intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Health of the Sick, be freed from the sorrows of this present life and enjoy everlasting bliss. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

*Prayer for Those Afflicted with  
Mental Illness*

Lord Jesus Christ, You have willed that Saint Dymphna should be invoked by thousands of clients as the patroness of nervous and mental disease and have brought about that her interest in these patients should be an inspiration to and an ideal of charity at her great shrine and throughout the world. Grant that, through the prayers of this youthful martyr of purity, those who suffer of nervous and mental illness everywhere on earth may be helped and consoled. I recommend to You in particular ... (*Here mention those you wish to pray for*).

Be pleased to hear the prayers of St. Dymphna and of Your Blessed Mother, Health of the Sick and Comforter of the



Afflicted, in behalf of those whom I recommend to the love and compassion of Your Sacred Heart. Give them patience to bear with their affliction and resignation to do Your Divine Will. Give them the consolation they need and especially the cure they so much desire, if it be Your Will. May we all serve Your suffering members with a charity which may merit for us the reward of being united forever in Heaven with You, our Divine Head, Who live and reign with the Father in the unity of the Holy Spirit forever, Amen.

---

O God, we beg You through Your Servant, Saint Dymphna, who sealed with her blood the love she had for You, her Eternal Spouse, to grant relief to those in our midst who suffer from mental afflictions and nervous disorders. Through Christ our Lord. Amen. (100 days indulgence)

### *Prayer of Shut-Ins*

Dear Jesus, I come in my weakness to ask You to help me to bear patiently my exile from people. I know how happy I ought to be to live the hidden life as You lived it and to share with You the privilege of suffering for the sins of the world. But I am so short-sighted and so cowardly that I shrink from the very sufferings which You have given me the honor to share with You. I would like to be up and around again among people; but if You wish me to remain as I am, please give me the grace to accept this exile so that I may turn each

hour of my loneliness into the golden rungs of a ladder by which I can climb high into heaven and bring others — many, many others — along with me. Amen.

NOVENA  
IN HONOR OF ST. DYMPHNA  
(Approved by Pope Urban VIII in 1635)\*

*First Day — for Faith*

O God, Source of our salvation, in the midst of a pagan people You enlightened St. Dymphna by the light of the true faith, which she professed under the guidance of her holy confessor, Gerebran, with such constancy that she suffered martyrdom. Through the intercession of these two saints, we beg You to strengthen the faith which You have given us, so that by wisely subjecting our souls to Your Supreme Authority, and by faithfully conforming our lives according to our faith, we may honor You with our whole heart and soul until the hour of our death. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Our Father. Hail Mary. Glory be. (*5 times*)

*Second Day — for Hope*

Almighty and infinitely good God, You have promised eternal salvation to those who obey Your commandments and make zealous use of Your graces. Through the intercession of St. Dymphna, who fled from the danger

---

\* If possible, try to receive the sacraments of Penance and Holy Eucharist at least once during this novena.

of sin by leaving the palace of her father, and who, eager to gain eternal salvation, fled to Belgium to live in poverty, we beg You to grant that we also, who are striving for eternal happiness, may overcome all obstacles in the way of virtue and may attain eternal salvation. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Our Father. Hail Mary. Glory be. (*5 times*)

### *Third Day — for Charity*

God of love, You are the most perfect Being and Creator of all that is good and beautiful. Through the intercession of St. Dymphna, who in her youth loved You above all creatures and for Your sake loved her neighbor as herself, as the image and likeness of You, as the price of the Blood of Jesus and as co-heir of heaven, be pleased to help us by Your powerful grace, that we may faithfully fulfill the two great commandments of charity not only in word, but also in action and in truth. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Our Father. Hail Mary. Glory be. (*5 times*)

### *Fourth Day — for Piety*

God, Our Creator and Supreme Master St. Dymphna served You with great zeal even in her childhood, by hearing Your word with delight, by assisting at Holy Mass with fervent reverence, and by receiving Holy Communion from the hand of St. Gerebran with tender devotion. Through her intercession we beg You to grant us the same

virtue of piety so that, having honored You during this life as our Creator, we may possess You hereafter as our final reward. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Our Father. Hail Mary. Glory be. (*5 times*)

*Fifth Day — for Prudence*

O God, Ruler of the universe, You allowed St. Dymphna to discover a helpful means of avoiding the evil intentions of her father. Through the merits of Your holy servant, be pleased to grant that we may become, according to the words of Jesus, simple as doves and wise as serpents, so that through prudent advice and sound judgment we may recognize what we must avoid and what we must do to achieve the great work of our salvation. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Our Father. Hail Mary. Glory be. (*5 times*)

*Sixth Day — for Justice*

O God, Source of eternal justice, You inspired St. Dymphna to flee from her country and her father in order to render to You that which was Yours. Through her intercession we beg You to make us seek after justice so that we may perform our duties toward You as we ought. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Our Father. Hail Mary. Glory be. (*5 times*)

*Seventh Day — for Fortitude*

O God, rewarder of those who remain firm in their good resolutions, you gave St.

Dymphna such a love of virtue that she had the courage to suffer privation, persecution, and even martyrdom. Through her prayers we beg You to grant us fortitude that we may courageously and perseveringly overcome ourselves and finally conquer the enemy of our salvation. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Our Father. Hail Mary. Glory be. (*5 times*)

*Eighth Day — for Temperance*

O God, You made St. Dymphna resplendent in the virtue of temperance so that she mastered sensual inclinations and used temporal goods prudently. With temperance she combined the beautiful virtues of modesty, docility, and humility. Let us not forget that humility is called the foundation of all virtue because it banishes from the soul pride, the obstacle to grace. Through the intercession of St. Dymphna, we beg You to guide and direct us, so that being preserved from evil and all nervous disorders, we may obey till death the commandments and counsels You have given us. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Our Father. Hail Mary. Glory be. (*5 times*)

*Ninth Day — for Chastity*

O God, Lover of innocent souls, You gave St. Dymphna the virtue of angelic purity which made her reserved in all her actions, modest in her dress, attentive in her conversation, upright in her character, so that she even shed her blood to preserve this precious

virtue. Through the intercession of St. Dymphna, we beg You to bestow upon us the virtue of chastity that we may enjoy peace of conscience in this life and the pure eternal joys of heaven hereafter. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Our Father. Hail Mary. Glory be. (*5 times*)

*Litany in Honor of St. Dymphna*

(For private use only)

Lord, have mercy on us.

Christ, have mercy on us.

Lord, have mercy on us.

Christ, hear us.

Christ, graciously hear us.

God the Father of Heaven, *have mercy on us.*

God the Son, Redeemer of the world, *have mercy on us.*

God the Holy Ghost, *have mercy on us.*

Holy Trinity, one God, *have mercy on us.*

Holy Mary, Virgin and Mother of God, *pray for us.*

Health of the sick, *pray, etc.*

Comforter of the afflicted,

Help of Christians,

St. Dymphna, virgin and martyr,

St. Dymphna, daughter of royal parents,

St. Dymphna, child of great beauty of soul and body,

St. Dymphna, docile to the lessons of your pious mother,

St. Dymphna, obedient to your saintly confessor,

St. Dymphna, who abandoned the court of

your father to escape the danger of im-  
 purity,  
 St. Dymphna, who chose a life of poverty  
 on earth so that you might lay up treas-  
 ures in Heaven,  
 St. Dymphna, who sought strength and  
 consolation at Holy Mass, Holy Com-  
 munion, and prayer,  
 St. Dymphna, ardent lover of the Divine  
 Bridegroom,  
 St. Dymphna, devoted to the Mother of  
 God,  
 St. Dymphna, beheaded by your own father,  
 St. Dymphna, martyr of holy purity,  
 St. Dymphna, brilliant example of Christian  
 youth,  
 St. Dymphna, renowned for many miracles,  
 St. Dymphna, glory of Ireland and Belgium,  
 St. Dymphna, full of compassion for those  
 in need,  
 St. Dymphna, protectress against all nerv-  
 ous and mental disorders,  
 St. Dymphna, consoler of the afflicted,  
 St. Dymphna, friend of the helpless,  
 St. Dymphna, comforter of the despondent,  
 St. Dymphna, light of those in mental  
 darkness,  
 St. Dymphna, patroness of those who suffer  
 with nervous and mental diseases,  
 That we may love the Lord our God with  
 all our hearts and above all things,  
 That we may hate sin and avoid all occasion  
 of sin,  
 That we may carefully preserve the virtue  
 of purity according to our state,

That we may receive the sacraments frequently,  
That we may obtain the spirit of prayer,  
That we may be humble and obedient, resigning ourselves to God's Holy Will,  
That we may learn to have confidence in God during our afflictions,  
That we may obtain the grace of final perseverance,  
In moments of temptation,  
In times of sickness, disease, war, and persecution,  
In our last illness,  
At the hour of death,  
Lamb of God, Who takest away the sins of the world, *spare us, O Lord.*  
Lamb of God, Who takest away the sins of the world, *graciously hear us, O Lord.*  
Lamb of God, Who takest away the sins of the world, *have mercy on us.*  
Pray for us, St. Dymphna,  
That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

*Let us pray:*

O God, since You gave St. Dymphna to Your Church as a model of all virtues, especially holy purity, and willed that she should seal her faith with her innocent blood and perform numerous miracles, grant that we who honor her as patroness of those afflicted with nervous and mental illness, may continue to enjoy her powerful intercession and protection and attain eternal life. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.



SAINT DYMPHNA Fr. Lawrence Lovasik  
Pictures, booklets, medals (silver 95¢), and  
a most beautiful eight inch ceramic statue of  
St. Dymphna (\$3.50) may be purchased  
from: Marian Action Publications, 211 W.  
7th. Avenue, Tarentum, Pa.

IMPRIMI POTES

Robert C. Hunter, S.V.D., Provincial, Girard, Pa.

NIHIL OBSTAT

A. H. Wiersbinski, LL.D., Censor Librorum

IMPRIMATUR

✠ John Mark Gannon, D.D., D.C.L., LL.D., Bishop of Erie





## OTHER WORKS

by Father Lawrence Lovasik, SVD

### EVER POPULAR "SAINT SERIES"

105—The Heart Saint (St. John of God)	10c
125—The Cancer Saint (St. Peregrine)	10c
139—St. Jude, Apostle of Those in Need	10c
149—American Madonna (Guadalupe)	10c
152—T. B. Saint (St. Therese)	10c
155—Prayer In Your Life	10c
157—St. Cecilia (Model of Purity)	10c
257—St. Dymphna	15c
274—Pope St. Pius X, Pope of the Eucharist	15c
276—Good St. Anne	15c
280—Devotions to the Divine Infant	15c
283—Walking With St. Raphael	15c
288—St. Michael—Strength of God	15c
289—St. Joseph, The Family Saint	15c

### DEVOTIONAL

116—Bread of Life, Vol. I	10c
117—Bread of Life, Vol. II	10c
130—Novena to Pius X	10c
268—Mary's Fatima Message	15c
282—Prayers for the Day	15c
361—Pointers for Religious	25c

### GENERAL

127—Kindness, Vol. I	10c
128—Kindness, Vol. II	10c
153—Teen-Age Dating	10c
154—Sex Is Sacred	10c
284—Consolation In Suffering	15c
285—Suffering Sanctified	15c

Order from:

**DIVINE WORD PUBLICATIONS**

*Techny, Illinois*