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Article

John Paul II and Jean Vanier's Theological View on Mental Health: Toward a Psycho-Spiritual Well-being Framework for College Students

Mario M. Cagurangan, Jr. and Philip L. Fuentes
University of Santo Tomas, Manila, Philippines
Correspondence: mario.cagurangan.gs@ust.edu.ph

Abstract

This article explores the theological reflections of Pope John Paul II and Jean Vanier and their relevance to promoting the psycho-spiritual well-being of college students. Pope John Paul II emphasized the inherent dignity of the human person and the redemptive value of suffering, framing mental illness as a potential path to spiritual growth. Through his L'Arche communities, Jean Vanier advocated for inclusive and compassionate living, emphasizing the healing power of authentic relationships and community. These theological insights form the foundation of a holistic framework for student mental health that integrates spiritual, psychological, emotional, and existential dimensions. The proposed model encourages inclusive campus environments, affirms the intrinsic worth of students, and guides them toward purpose and meaning, offering a compassionate response to the growing mental health challenges in higher education.

Keywords: *Higher education, human dignity, inclusivity, Jean Vanier, mental health, Pope John Paul II, psycho-spiritual, spirituality, well-being*

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Introduction

The college experience, while typically seen as a time of intellectual and personal development, is increasingly marked by psychological and emotional turmoil. Academic pressure, identity exploration, social challenges, and external stressors exacerbated by events such as the COVID-19 pandemic have significantly impacted student mental health. Recent studies estimate that at least one in seven college students suffer from mental health issues such as anxiety, depression, and isolation, which are compounded by limited access to mental health services and ongoing stigma surrounding psychological illness.[1] These complex and culturally-influenced challenges call for more integrative and holistic responses that address psychological and social dimensions and existential and spiritual concerns.[2]

Despite increased awareness, existing models of student mental health care often remain inadequate in addressing the full range of student needs. Predominantly clinical and biomedical approaches may neglect more profound spiritual questions around meaning, purpose, and identity, key issues that often emerge during this transitional life stage.[3] There is a pressing need to explore complementary perspectives that affirm human dignity, promote community belonging, and offer spiritual resilience in times of suffering.

In this study, we propose a psycho-spiritual framework for student well-being rooted in the theological insights of Pope John Paul II and Jean Vanier. John Paul II emphasized the inherent dignity of every human being, especially in the face of suffering, which he viewed not as a meaningless burden but as a transformative opportunity for spiritual growth. Suffering is certainly a part of the mystery of man.[4] Through his work with L'Arche communities, Jean Vanier demonstrated the healing power of inclusive, compassionate communities where people with and without disabilities live together in mutual support.[5] Both thinkers challenge reductionist understandings of health and offer resources for building resilient, meaning-centered responses to mental health.

While the theologies examined are rich in insights, they have yet to be fully integrated into contemporary student mental health care models. Our review of the relevant literature reveals a gap, particularly in applying these frameworks within academic settings, which hinders the facilitation of an integral and holistic approach to mental health issues. Thus, our objective is to address this identified gap by

[1] R. P. Auerbach et al., "Mental Disorders among College Students in the World Health Organization World Mental Health Surveys," *Psychological Medicine* 46, no. 14 (October 3, 2016): 2955–70, https://doi.org/10.1017/S0033291716001665.

[2] Apurvakumar Pandya and Pragya Lodha, "Mental Health Consequences of COVID-19 Pandemic among College Students and Coping Approaches Adapted by Higher Education Institutions: A Scoping Review," *SSM - Mental Health* 2 (December 2022), https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssmmh.2022.100122.

[3] René Hefti, "Integrating Religion and Spirituality into Mental Health Care, Psychiatry and Psychotherapy," *Religions* 2, no. 4 (November 2, 2011): 611–27, https://doi.org/10.3390/rel2040611.

[4] John Paul II, "Salvifici Doloris: On the Christian Meaning of Human Suffering " (Vatican: Librea Editrice Vaticana, February 11, 1984) 39.

[5] Jean Vanier and John Swinton, Mental Health: The Inclusive Church Resource (London: Darton, Longman & Todd Ltd., 2014).

proposing a conceptual framework that combines spiritual anthropology, community-based support, and modern mental health practices.

Employing a critical analysis approach, we intend to analyze the phenomenon of mental health organized around three interrelated themes—1) mental health challenges faced by college students, 2) theological perspectives on human dignity, suffering, and community, and 3) the integration of theology and mental health in higher education—we aim to contribute to the development of more holistic, inclusive, and spiritually grounded mental health strategies for college students.

Discussions

Mental Health Challenges for College Students

Health is more than an abstract concept due to different implications for health services, practice, policy, and the like. From a social constructionist point of view, it is possible to view health as the contingent outcome of decisions, acts, and intentions quickly incorporated into a web of social norms, expectations, institutions, and practices.[6] There are no uniform interpretations from an etymological perspective since Greek-Latin cultures embrace a dynamic process and functional variables. In contrast, Anglo-Saxon cultures value a static notion and structural features. "Health" has the same root as "whole" in Anglo-Saxon cultures and refers to wholeness, completeness, and totality. In contrast, in Greek-Latin cultures, "health" meant "balance," "harmony," and "equilibrium with nature." Health is dealing with and controlling one's illness and well-being. The ability to respond to many environmental situations with the desired emotional, cognitive, and behavioral reaction and avoid unpleasant ones can be a more practical definition of health.[7]

Historically, mental health issues have been marginalized in medical practice. This is unwarranted. Mental health targets should extend beyond mental illness services and include general health care prevention, promotion, and psychosocial aspects.[8]

Mental health refers to a state of well-being in which an individual realizes their potential, can cope with the everyday stresses of life, work productively, and contribute to their community. It encompasses emotional, psychological, and social well-being, affecting how people think, feel, and act. It is a continuum, with individuals experiencing varying mental well-being throughout their lives.

Mental Health is a complex and multifaceted concept encompassing various aspects of well-being and functioning. Individuals need to prioritize their mental health and seek support when required to maintain a balanced and fulfilling life.[9]

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[6] Fabio Leonardi, "The Definition of Health: Towards New Perspectives," International Journal of Health Services 48, no. 4 (October 14, 2018): 739,https://doi.org/10.1177/0020731418782653.

[7] Fabio Leonardi, "The Definition of Health: Towards New Perspectives," International Journal of Health Services 48, no. 4 (October 14, 2018): 742,https://doi.org/10.1177/0020731418782653.

[8] Geraldine Strathdee Graham Thornicroft, "Mental Health," *British Medical Journal* 303, no. 6799 (August 17, 1991): 410–12, https://www.jstor.org/stable/29712685.

[9] World Health Organization, "World Health Report 2001 & Comprehensive Mental Health Action Plan 2013-2030" (Geneva, Switzerland, September 21, 2021).

Mental well-being is "a state of well-being that allows individuals to cope with the normal stresses of life and function productively."[10] All cultures, values, and traditions may have different ideas about healthy mental health. Culture impacts how people experience symptoms, communicate these symptoms, manage psychological issues, and determine whether to seek help.[11] These variations suggest that assessing the various viewpoints of mentally healthy populations regarding mental health may be the most effective method to improve our comprehension of it. Cultural anthropology teaches us that almost every form of behavior is healthy in some cultures, but that does not mean the tolerated behavior is mentally healthy.[12] More knowledge about mental health is essential since it has a significant impact on the economy, which seems to be heavily dependent on the mental health of the populace. Mental well-being is essential for economic progress. Economics and mental health are intertwined.[13] An increased risk of mental illness may result from economic decline because of exposure to risk factors such as poverty, unemployment, low education, social marginalization, and treatment costs.[14]

Generally, stigma leads to negative social experiences such as isolation, rejection, marginalization, and discrimination. If related to a health condition such as mental illness, stigma may affect a person's illness and treatment course, including access to appropriate and professional medical treatment.[15] Mental health stigma is defined as the disgrace, social disapproval, or social discrediting of individuals with a mental health problem.[16] The stigma of living with a mental health condition has been described as being worse than the experience of the illness itself.[17] Common stereotypes associated with people with mental health conditions are that they are dangerous, incompetent, and weak in character.[18] Despite a rise in mental health knowledge in recent decades, negative attitudes about mental illness still exist. People

[10] Paolo Fusar-Poli et al., "What Is Good Mental Health? A Scoping Review," *European Neuropsychopharmacology* 31 (February 2020): 33–46, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.euroneuro.2019.12.105.

[11] Samuel, and Regan A. R. Gurung Eshun, *Culture and Mental Health*, ed. Sussie Eshun and Regan A. R. Gurung (Wiley, 2009), https://doi.org/10.1002/9781444305807.

[12] George E Vaillant, "Positive Mental Health: Is There a Cross-Cultural Definition?," *World Psychiatry : Official Journal of the World Psychiatric Association (WPA)* 11, no. 2 (June 2012): 93–99, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.wpsyc.2012.05.006.

[13] Martin Knapp and Gloria Wong, "Economics and Mental Health: The Current Scenario," *World Psychiatry* 19, no. 1 (February 10, 2020): 3–14, https://doi.org/10.1002/wps.20692.

[14] Nicholle Mae Amor Tan Maravilla and Myles Joshua Toledo Tan, "Philippine Mental Health Act: Just an Act? A Call to Look Into the Bi-Directionality of Mental Health and Economy," *Frontiers in Psychology* 12 (July 21, 2021), https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2021.706483.

[15] Muhammad Arsyad Subu et al., "Types of Stigma Experienced by Patients with Mental Illness and Mental Health Nurses in Indonesia: A Qualitative Content Analysis," *International Journal of Mental Health Systems* 15, no. 1 (December 18, 2021): 1/12, https://doi.org/10.1186/s13033-021-00502-x.

[16] Muhammad Arsyad Subu et al., "Types of Stigma Experienced by Patients with Mental Illness and Mental Health Nurses in Indonesia: A Qualitative Content Analysis," *International Journal of Mental Health Systems* 15, no. 1 (December 18, 2021): 2/12, https://doi.org/10.1186/s13033-021-00502-x

[17] Shazana Shahwan et al., "Strategies to Reduce Mental Illness Stigma: Perspectives of People with Lived Experience and Caregivers," *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health* 19, no. 3 (January 31, 2022): 1/17, https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph19031632.

[18] Shazana Shahwan et al., "Strategies to Reduce Mental Illness Stigma: Perspectives of People with Lived Experience and Caregivers," *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health* 19, no. 3 (January 31, 2022): 1/17, https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph19031632.

with mental illness suffer from self-stigma, expected stigma, and external stigma.[19] Interpersonal contact and increased knowledge of mental illness may reduce fear of people with mental illness, perceptions of risk, and the desire for social isolation, according to numerous studies.[20] These findings support the contact hypothesis, a standard intergroup theory that holds that interacting with people from a different social group might lessen prejudiced attitudes toward that group by enhancing knowledge and dispelling stereotypes.[21]

Concerns about mental health are widespread among college students, affecting approximately one in seven, with depression and anxiety being the most common. During the lockdown period, factors related to changes in academic structures from face-to-face learning to virtual education, tedious activities and examinations, and battles with limited resources such as Internet connectivity and mobile devices can be directly associated with anxiety, stress, frustration, and depressive disorders. Some studies have concluded that this pandemic and home quarantine have contributed to health anxiety and loneliness among university students.[22] A study focused on the academic, health, and lifestyle factors affecting the mental health of college students; they found a significant impact of these concerns on their current mental state. The results regarding academic-related concerns among the participants suggest that many encountered challenges maintaining focus on their studies, expressed worries about their grades and future, found it challenging to adapt to distance learning, and faced an increased workload. A significant number of participants experienced various health-related stressors during the survey period. The COVID-19 outbreak had a significant impact, with the most common stressors being infection, mental illness, and suicidal ideation. The participants also reported concerns about their physical and psychological well-being, including a lack of fitness, depressive thoughts, fear for loved ones' health, changes in eating patterns, and disruptions to sleep. Meanwhile, findings highlight the various lifestyle stressors faced by the participants, including minimal access to counseling services, social isolation, concerns related to media, healthcare, access to services, social distancing, travel changes, and financial situations.[23]

Filipino cultural values are diverse in nearly every way. The idea that mental diseases are something to be ashamed of and that anxiety and sadness do not exist are two common misconceptions. According to a qualitative study by Tanaka et al. (2018),

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[19] Elizabeth Felix and Freda Lynn, "Mental Health Stigma and Social Contact Revisited: The Role of Network Closeness and Negativity," *Society and Mental Health* 12, no. 1 (March 11, 2022): 49–63, https://doi.org/10.1177/21568693211043156.

[20] Patrick W. Corrigan, Benjamin G. Druss, and Deborah A. Perlick, "The Impact of Mental Illness Stigma on Seeking and Participating in Mental Health Care," *Psychological Science in the Public Interest* 15, no. 2 (October 3, 2014): 37–70, https://doi.org/10.1177/1529100614531398.

[21] Elizabeth Felix and Freda Lynn, "Mental Health Stigma and Social Contact Revisited: The Role of Network Closeness and Negativity," *Society and Mental Health* 12, no. 1 (March 11, 2022): 49–63, https://doi.org/10.1177/21568693211043156.

[22] Mary Antoniete Tavera Jacinto and Adeline M De Guzman, "Factors Affecting the University Students' Mental Health during the 2020 COVID-19 Outbreak," *Journal of Educational, Health and Community Psychology* 1, no. 2 (June 3, 2023): 494–514, https://doi.org/10.12928/jehcp.v1i2.26059.

[23] Mary Antoniete Tavera Jacinto and Adeline M De Guzman, "Factors Affecting the University Students' Mental Health during the 2020 COVID-19 Outbreak," *Journal of Educational, Health and Community Psychology* 1, no. 2 (June 3, 2023): 494–514, https://doi.org/10.12928/jehcp.v1i2.26059.

this stigma is a result of the public's perception of mental disorders, which is divided into three themes: First, there are familial issues, in which the family rejects or disowns the family member with a mental illness because they think it may be inherited. The second is irrational optimism and pessimism on the severity of the disorder, which assumes that people with mental illnesses would either overcome any psychological anguish on their own or will undoubtedly have substantial functional damage. The third is the oversimplified chronic path, in which those who do not have a mental illness apply an acute disease paradigm to those who are and anticipate complete recovery soon.[24]

University students are going through substantial transformations from the life stage of adolescence to emerging adulthood.[25] Psycho-spiritual well-being is a comprehensive construct encompassing mental, emotional, and spiritual aspects to facilitate total health. Psychological well-being includes ensuring emotional stability, cognitive function, and psychological resilience, ensuring people adapt to stress and adversity in life. Emotional stability ensures a balanced reaction to life's highs and lows, whereas cognitive function ensures that people process information and make good decisions. Psychological resilience ensures that people bounce back from adversity and remain strong from the inside. When these elements coexist, people have control over their thoughts and emotions, leading to a balanced and harmonious overall well-being.

Spiritual well-being is crucial in creating a sense of meaning and purpose in life. The spirit (which animals do not have) is the "breadth of God" (Gen 2.7, not to be confused with the Holy Spirit).[26] The ability to connect with something greater than oneself is a truth about God that is spiritual. Activities such as meditation, prayer, or acts of charity, which assist in creating inner peace and serenity, are instrumental in achieving spiritual well-being. This state also promotes the formation of compassion and altruism, affirming that the individual's fulfillment strongly relates to how one handles and gives to others. A robust spiritual anchor can offer solace during difficult times, providing a more profound sense of hope and purpose.

Spirituality is how persons live in response to the Spirit of God and in relationship to themselves, others, and the world (Haight, 239-41; Gutierrez, 204). Jean Vanier's spirituality of living with the poor leads him to interpret Jesus and the ethics of Aristotle in a way that yields a Christian ethic of compassionate love, wisdom, and justice. Like the Good Samaritan, Vanier's Jesus was a person moved by suffering who longed to forgive sinners and who felt anger at religious and social injustice.[27]

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[24] Nicholle Mae Amor Tan Maravilla and Myles Joshua Toledo Tan, "Philippine Mental Health Act: Just an Act? A Call to Look Into the Bi-Directionality of Mental Health and Economy," *Frontiers in Psychology* 12 (July 21, 2021), https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2021.706483.

[25] Chi Hung Leung and Hok Ko Pong, "Cross-Sectional Study of the Relationship between the Spiritual Wellbeing and Psychological Health among University Students," *PLOS ONE* 16, no. 4 (April 15, 2021): e0249702, https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0249702.

[26] Janice Clarke, "Body and Soul in Mental Health Care," *Mental Health, Religion & Culture* 13, no. 6 (September 2010): 649–57, https://doi.org/10.1080/13674676.2010.488416.

[27] Brian Berry, "Jesus and Virtue Ethics in the Spirituality of Jean Vanier," *New Theology Review* 21 (May 2008): 59–69.

Combining psychological and spiritual well-being is the key to a more satisfying and balanced life. As individuals develop psychological resilience and spiritual development, they learn to better cope with stress, form intimate relationships, and positively contribute to society. Research indicated that those with both mental and spiritual well-being have lower rates of anxiety and depression and higher life satisfaction. Thus, developing psycho-spiritual well-being through introspection, mindfulness, and love is a key to overall health.[28]

Pope John Paul II's Theology of the Dignity of the Human Person

Humans are created in the image and likeness of God. Man is called to that fullness of life which is in God. The fact that man was created in the image and likeness of God shows that God wills to communicate his own life to man. This communication reaches its definitive fulfillment in Christ. This is why Christ the Redeemer "fully reveals man to himself".[29] Our inherent dignity as human beings stems from our creation in the image and likeness of God. Respect for the dignity of the human person is addressed in all health codes of ethics for health care professionals. "The inherent dignity of the human person must be respected and protected regardless of the nature of the person's health problem or social status." Human dignity is also the foundation of the Church's social doctrine. The whole of the Church's social doctrine develops from the principle that affirms the inviolable dignity of the human person."[30] No matter the type of health issue or status in society, every human has inherent dignity that must be respected and preserved.[31] This dignity of every human being can be understood as "infinite" (*dignitas infinita*), as Pope St. John Paul II affirmed in a meeting for people living with various limitations or disabilities.[32]

Role of Faith and Spirituality

Faith is a deeply personal and often multifaceted concept with different meanings depending on cultural, religious, and philosophical perspectives. Faith typically involves belief, trust, and confidence in something or someone beyond tangible evidence or rational proof. Faith is God's gift (infused virtue) and is born from the Spirit of Truth within our souls, illuminating everything. The spirit makes us believe in coordination with the whole Church and in everything God has revealed.[33]

It is essential to recognize that faith is a deeply personal and subjective concept that can vary significantly among individuals and cultures. While faith often involves belief in something beyond empirical evidence, it is not necessarily incompatible with

[28] Harold G. Koenig, "Religion, Spirituality, and Health: The Research and Clinical Implications," *ISRN Psychiatry* 2012 (December 16, 2012): 1–33, https://doi.org/10.5402/2012/278730.

[29] John Paul II, "Redemptor Hominis, The Redeemer of Man," *Vatican* (Vatican: Vatican, March 2, 1979).

[30] Kathleen A., PhD, RN Kalb, "Lessons from John Paul II: Theology of the Body Underpins Health Care." Journal of the Catholic Health Association of the United States. ," *Journal of the Catholic Health Association of the United States. Reprinted from Health Progress*, March 2012.

[31] United Nations, *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (United Nations, 2013), https://doi.org/10.18356/e9d835b3-en.

[32] Victor Manuel Cardinal Fernandez, "Declaration of the Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith 'Dignitas Infinita' on Human Dignity" (Rome: Holy See Press Office – Summary of Bulletin, April 2, 2024).

[33] Mark Jordan, "On Faith" (University of Notre Dame Press, 1990), 137–42, https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctvpj7656.

reason or critical thinking. Many people integrate faith with rational inquiry, personal experience, and ethical reflection to cultivate a rich and meaningful understanding of the world and their place within it. *"If we believe the word of men, how much greater is the word of God* (1 John 5:9)." How can men have faith in the word of merely human witnesses, even though humans are fallible and mistaken? How much more reasonable is it for us to have faith in the word of God, who is infallible and trustworthy?

It is fundamental to the Catholic belief that any salutary relationship with God depends on God's free and gracious manifestation accepted in faith. Described as "the beginning and root of all justification," faith is seen as an affirmative intellectual response to revelation. Without a prior revelation on God's part, faith would be impossible, for it would have no basis and no object. Moreover, without faith, the whole edifice of Christian existence would collapse.[34]

A good working definition of faith starts with a distinction between 'faith that' and 'faith in'. 'Faith that' is something like belief, an assertion that something or some situation obtains. Like other beliefs, it tends to concern itself with making claims about something, past, present, or future. In contrast, 'Faith in' concerns fidelity to and trust in an unavoidable reality. To have faith in something is to recognize and affirm its worth. Of course, these two forms of faith can be, and often are, found mixed. However, the less faith is occupied with specific claims about states-of-affairs (faith that), and the more it is concerned with my relationship with reality (faith in), the closer it is to the essence of faith. Other crucial qualifiers distinguish faith from belief (and knowledge); perhaps we will have time to discuss some of them in our conversation. Faith requires a 'leap' beyond certitude or what is confirmable. Therefore, all faith is 'undecidable' – it cannot ultimately be safeguarded or assured; it is always open to doubt and can fail. However, if faith is a 'leap,' it is also a 'wager'; the measure of faith is what we are willing to put on the table as our stake. In its most straightforward and most compelling expressions, faith is the willingness to stake one's life. Because faith is a type of existential wager, it will permanently alter our behavior or way of being. This means, in the Catholic sense, 'faith without works is dead,' but it also means that faith is, in a sense, never fully accomplished. It must be perpetually renewed to maintain faith.[35]

Faith is a powerful instrument for bringing people and God together. It allows man to transcend his boundaries and move him toward spiritual reality and beyond the natural order. The grace of love, which makes man like God and unites his will with God's, allows man to behave according to God's will and achieves union with

[34] Avery Dulles, "Faith and Revelation," in *Systematic Theology* (1517 Media, 2011), 79–108, https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctt22nm83q.7.

[35] B., Badman-King, A., Chastain, D., Coyne, L., Heal, J., Jollimore, T., Lawford-Smith, H., Overall, C., Scarry, E., Steward, H., Stone, A., & Vassilopoulou, P. Treanor, "Faith: The Things That Really Matter: Philosophical Conversations on the Cornerstones of Life," in *The Things That Really Matter* (UCL Press, 2022), 227–46.

God via faith. The power of love transforms man. Nonetheless, love and faith always work together in this metamorphosis.[36]

John Paul II's firm belief that spirituality is the foundation of human existence is a legacy of research on St. John of the Cross' theology of spirituality. Part of this spiritual dimension is also the experience of God as the origin of our spirituality. The man seeks God in himself by posing existential questions, with whom he builds a relationship and engages in conversation. In this way, the human being manifests as dialogical and relational in his most profound spiritual dimension. Union with God does not imply self-loss or the objectification of man by God; rather, it enriches us and inspires us to take creative action, always within the bounds of our free will.[37]

Spirituality promotes mental health by providing a framework for describing life's experiences and creating a sense of integrity and existential interconnection. Individuals with spiritual experience and religious beliefs can cope with their stress and psychological problems, and the confrontation methods are more potent; spirituality creates a power that affects the physical posture, feelings, thoughts, and communications, and will be affected by them.[38] The spiritual dimension is potent in fortifying students' mental well-being. Spirituality imbues life with meaning and purpose, offering solace and guidance in times of adversity.[39]

Man's encounter with God is a private encounter between two individuals. Man lives in the innermost parts of God, and God is inside man because of the gift that God gives him. This does not, however, make it harder to distinguish between God and humanity. They all maintain their substantiality since they are still people.[40] Both social philosophy and anthropological interpretations extend this link to other individuals. Naturally, the other person does not have a role like God's. However, we continue to be distinct individuals via our interactions with him, just like in the relationship between God and humans. We are destined to create a community of people of our own volition and that of others. The encounter with the idea of St. John of the Cross reinforces John Paul II's belief in the individualistic character of Christianity. Faith results from an individual's inner experience rather than some overarching philosophy. For this reason, a person's Christian religion safeguards him from being objectified and instrumentalized and goes hand in hand with his freedom.[41]

John Vanier's Theology of Community and Belonging

"Community is where we ideally learn to be ourselves without fear or constraint. Community life deepens through mutual trust among all its members. The

[36] Arkadiusz Modrzejewski, "Spiritual Heritage of Europe in the Light of Personalistic Universalism of Karol Wojtyla—John Paul II," *Religions* 12, no. 4 (March 29, 2021): 6/14, https://doi.org/10.3390/rel12040244.

[37] Arkadiusz Modrzejewski, "Spiritual Heritage of Europe in the Light of Personalistic Universalism of Karol Wojtyla—John Paul II," *Religions* 12, no. 4 (March 29, 2021): 5/14, https://doi.org/10.3390/rel12040244.

[38] Esa Jafari et al., "Spiritual Well-Being and Mental Health in University Students," *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences* 5 (2010): 1477–81, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2010.07.311.

[39] Milatun Nadifa et al., "The Importance of the Spiritual Dimension in Improving the Mental Well-Being of College Students," *Studies in Learning and Teaching* 5, no. 2 (August 31, 2024): 370–81, https://doi.org/10.46627/silet.v5i2.382.

[40] Paul VI, "Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation 'Dei Verbum,'" in Vatican II (Vatican, 1965),4.

[41] Modrzejewski, "Spiritual Heritage of Europe in the Light of Personalistic Universalism of Karol Wojtyla—John Paul II."

more authentic and creative a community is in its search for the essential, the more its members are called beyond their concerns and tend to unite the simple, gentle, and concerned people, establish a community, and show each other daily. It is made of small gestures, all the services, and sacrifices that say, 'I love you' and 'I am happy to be with you.'[42]

Vanier's idea of belonging gives us a compelling perspective on the state of humanity and fraternity of all people. Inclusion is not the human goal of belonging. Humans cannot find a sense of belonging by attempting to resolve political or personal conflicts. Belonging has nothing to do with justice, equality, uniqueness, freedom, or choice. These are not steps toward belonging; they are the results of belonging. We must feel we belong before truly comprehending autonomy, freedom, and self-representation.[43] Vanier believes that despite our differences and similarities, we are united by humanity. We have a shared humanity and are members of the same species. He contends that despite our differences, we are bound together by our (God-given) desire or, at the very least, our capacity to unite to serve and benefit from our gifts in and for one another. We become one body where we know we belong as we give and receive the gifts we provide to one another. Being a part of a community is not enough; people must feel like they belong.[44]

Embracing Jean Vanier's Theology of Community and Belonging in College Life is a theoretical concept and a transformative philosophy deeply influenced by Vanier's work with L'Arche communities. It underscores the importance of inclusive communities and human connection's profound, life-altering power. When these principles are applied to the college environment, they can revolutionize students' experiences, creating a supportive and enriching atmosphere that propels personal growth, cultivates authentic relationships, and instills a profound sense of belonging.

One core tenet of Vanier's theology is the radical acceptance of all individuals, celebrating diversity, and embracing each person's unique contribution. It translates into creating inclusive environments where all students feel valued and accepted. By organizing events and activities that celebrate diversity, we encourage participation from all segments of the student body, fostering a spirit of inclusion. However, it is crucial to acknowledge the potential challenges of implementation. For instance, implementing buddy systems where higher-year students'mentor first-year students can be resource-intensive and may require careful matching of mentors and mentees.

Additionally, mental health initiatives focusing on peer support must be supplemented with professional counseling services. Despite these challenges, when these initiatives are successfully implemented, they can provide safe spaces for students to share their experiences and support each other, reinforcing Vanier's sense

[42] Rhody Mastin, "Theological Horizons. 'Jean Vanier and Community,'" 2015.

[43] John Swinton, "From Inclusion to Belonging: A Practical Theology of Community, Disability and Humanness," *Journal of Religion, Disability & Health* 16, no. 2 (April 2012): 172–90, https://doi.org/10.1080/15228967.2012.676243.

[44] John Swinton, "From Inclusion to Belonging: A Practical Theology of Community, Disability and Humanness," *Journal of Religion, Disability & Health* 16, no. 2 (April 2012): 172–90, https://doi.org/10.1080/15228967.2012.676243.

of community and mutual care. This fosters a sense of belonging and promotes students' mental health and well-being, demonstrating the holistic impact of Vanier's principles.

Vanier's vision of community is built on the foundation of authentic relationships, where individuals genuinely care for and support each other. Small group interactions are pivotal in fostering these relationships within the college setting. Study groups, for instance, aid academic success and help students form meaningful connections. By encouraging students to form study groups and providing spaces for these interactions, colleges can promote deeper understanding and empathy among participants, enhancing academic performance and student success. This demonstrates that Vanier's principles foster a sense of community and improve the overall college experience. Living in learning communities is another effective way to build authentic relationships. Themed housing, where students with similar interests or academic goals live together, can foster a sense of community and shared purpose. Organizing community service projects also brings students together to work on common goals, promoting teamwork and mutual respect, which are essential components of Vanier's vision of community. These benefits underscore the transformative potential of Vanier's principles in the college environment.

Vanier's theology is the belief in everyone's inherent worth. In a college setting, this can be manifested by recognizing and celebrating the diverse contributions of students. Acknowledging not only academic and athletic achievements but also acts of kindness, community involvement, and personal growth helps to create an environment where every student feels valued. This fosters a sense of community and students' sense of identity and self-worth, demonstrating the transformative impact of Vanier's principles. Inclusive leadership is a crucial aspect of Vanier's theology. By ensuring that student governance and leadership roles are accessible to diverse students, we can bring various perspectives and skills to the forefront, enriching the community. This promotes diversity and inclusion and empowers student leaders to play a significant role in fostering a sense of community and belonging, which aligns with Vanier's vision. This emphasis on inclusive leadership empowers all college community members to contribute and feel a sense of belonging.

Vanier's emphasis on reflection and personal growth is not just a suggestion but a fundamental aspect of his theology. Integrating courses that encourage students to reflect on their values, ethics, and societal roles into the curriculum can empower them to foster a deeper understanding of themselves and their place in the world. This holistic approach to education, aligned with Vanier's principles, enhances academic learning and promotes personal growth and self-discovery. It encourages students to engage in self-reflection, which can lead to a more fulfilling college experience.

Integrating Pope John Paul II and Jean Vanier's Framework

Inadequacy of Pope John Paul II's Theology of Mental Health

The theological corpus of Pope John Paul II over his long papacy includes general information about the trials of humanity and the redemptive power of faith in human suffering. Still, it falls short in many areas regarding multifactorial aspects of mental health. We argue that, despite the importance of his focus on the spiritual dimension of healing, his view prohibits the recognition of an essential factor in explaining the phenomenon and, therefore, potentially in healing itself, namely, psychological factors and the need for specialized therapeutic intervention. Using contemporary scholarship and the fundamental analysis of specific papal words, the article stresses the need for a more integrated formulation for mental health care, addressing the ambiguous interlacing of spirituality and psychology, overlapping with the human flesh.

Pope John Paul II undoubtedly left an indelible mark on Catholic theology, especially in his masterful articulations on human suffering. His focus on the salvation to be found in suffering, in the share in Christ's suffering, provides a dramatic orientation of meaning to suffering. His method emphasizes the spiritual dimension of mental health and illness, which could abstract away from the complex understanding of psychology and the psychological level of the current condition. Catholic theology has a breadth, consistency, and specificity, especially about fundamental doctrines, which makes it possible to know much more clearly what is integrated with psychology.[45]

Pope John Paul II's theology recognizes the role of spirituality in mental health, but it fails to consider all of the complexities between psychological processes and spiritual health. Yet, as evidenced in analyzing character strengths and virtues, it delineates the need for a marriage between psychology and faith. Inattentiveness to either would only stymie the holistic view of human flourishing that it espouses, one in which both psychological and spiritual pursuits are interrelated and relevant to the development of a whole person. The integration here is critical as mental health issues often stem from psychological processes that cannot be effectively addressed via spiritual counseling alone. Psychotherapy and psychopharmacology treatment, on the other hand, target the neurobiological and cognitive dimensions of mental illness, which are not fully addressed by these spiritual approaches.

Pope John Paul II offers profound insights into the redemptive nature of suffering, which, in his papal declarations, says the mere act of participating in the suffering of Christ takes on a dual dimension. If one becomes a sharer in the sufferings of Christ, this happens because Christ has opened his suffering to man. After all, He, in His redemptive suffering, has become, in a certain sense, a sharer in all human suffering.[46] In a way, he became a sharer in all human sorrows by his redeeming

[45] Paul Vitz, "Christian and Catholic Advantages of Connecting Psychology with Faith," *Journal of Psychology and Christianity* 30, no. 4 (2011): 294–306.

[46] John Paul II, "Salvifici Doloris: On the Christian Meaning of Human Suffering " (Vatican: Librea Editrice Vaticana, February 11, 1984) 19.

suffering. Man, discovering through faith the redemptive suffering of Christ, also discovers in it his sufferings; he rediscovers them through faith, enriched with a new content and meaning.[47] His theology may sometimes lack a robust framework for providing practical support and care for individuals experiencing mental health challenges. There may be a risk of spiritualizing suffering without addressing the tangible needs for therapeutic interventions and community support.[48] The argument is reinforced by examining different worldviews, such as differing worldviews and pastoral care theology, indicating a call for the caregiver to become a pastor who contradicts the spiritual vision/understanding of suffering. The essential need for physical care and support, and the inadequacy of spiritual counsel in meeting these patients' clinical needs. It is possible that we might risk spiritualizing the suffering and neglecting the practical needs for treatment and community, which is the first aspect that could, in its lack of nuance, ignore the reality of mental illness. Or, we can refuse to change; we can finally keep our pandemic hearts locked in the past, never removing the masks we thought we would wear forever from the foggy glass, breathing in the singular failure that things do not change as we hoped they would when all of this happened. While keeping those, you feel like a fraud. Faith can comfort and strengthen but not substitute for professional mental health services.

Suffering is an experience of evil,[49] yet it opens the way to conversion, rebuilding goodness in the suffering subject. The suffering that concerns or threatens me is an ever-changing state of my consciousness, being, and experience. On the other hand, the notion of suffering has a long tradition in Christianity, and it has always been subject to narration and the transcendence of oneself as a sufferer.[50] However, suffering opens the way to conversion, rebuilding goodness in the subject who suffers and teaches. But we must balance this view with an understanding of the paralytic nature of mental illness. Suffering can transform into spiritual growth, but it can also become a substantial source of psychological ruin, one that influences the trajectory of our lives. Emphasizing the transcendent aspect alone may not adequately support people experiencing mental health difficulties in the here and now and contribute to their suffering.

Inadequacy of John Vanier's Theology of Mental Health

Jean Vanier did much to promote the dialogue and discussion around disability and mental health by founding L'Arche communities. This is a living message that encapsulates the service that the Lord of the Feast can compose with simple patterns of shared life borne out of the belief that vulnerable people flourish when they have access to resources to assist them in a community. An engagement with Vanier's work

[47] John Paul II, "Salvifici Doloris: On the Christian Meaning of Human Suffering," 20.

[48] Kathleen Cahalan, "The Catholic Tradition of Suffering and Healing: Differing Worldviews and the Theology of Pastoral Care," *The Journal of Pastoral Care & Counseling* 55, no. 3 (2001): 217–28.

[49] John Paul II, "Salvifici Doloris: On the Christian Meaning of Human Suffering", 26.

[50] Franjo Mijatović, "(In)Active God—Coping with Suffering and Pain from the Perspective of Christianity," *Religions* 12, no. 11 (October 28, 2021): 939, https://doi.org/10.3390/rel12110939.

through a sharp critical lens indicates an idealization of the community about mental health care that overlooks the inherent diversity of people and the complexity of mental illness. This paper hopes to show that it is critically important to examine this aspect of Vanier's theology in that light and to provide a fuller articulation of Vanier's views on God as a community, which responds to the shortcomings of such a model.

Vanier's theology, the text says, emphasizes "the transformative power of community in promoting good mental health." This must be balanced against the visceral sensing from L'Arche, a lived experience in which belonging and mutual support make an absolute world of difference! But at times, the text continues, Vanier's approach can idealize living in community as the one solution to every madness. This creates a potentially able environment that has the potential to circumvent the reality that not everyone has the environment that would support their concern or may even need additional therapeutic measures for their individual needs.

This critique scrutinizes mental health, healing, and community and will presumably highlight the complexities that Vanier's worldview entails. His work would amplify the power of the community while mourning its reach. Some may flourish not in societal situations and require even particular rehabilitation programs outside society's helpful requirements. Those with serious mental illness, for instance, may have an episodic or chronic need for pharmaceutical agents or more specialized therapeutic interventions that may not be readily available in a congregate housing model.

While Vanier acknowledges the importance of psychological well-being, his theology may sometimes underestimate the depth and complexity of psychological factors contributing to mental health issues. There may be a tendency to prioritize spiritual solutions over evidence-based psychological interventions, potentially overlooking the multifaceted nature of mental health care.

This inclination toward spiritual solutions instead of psychological ones is consistent with Vanier's emphasis on spiritual affirmation and the redemptive power of faith and community. However, pursuing this approach risks devaluing the art and science of mental health care, which is the provision of psychotherapy, medication management, and psychiatric care. We cannot abandon these strategies in service to purely spiritual interventions; these tools are part of the clinical reality of mental illness.

The interplay between community support and professional therapy in mental health care is a complex and essential area of focus. The significance of community as a foundation for fostering a sense of belonging and support among individuals is imperative. He argues that community is integral to personal development and mental health but should not be considered a substitute for professional mental health services.[51] Rather, community-based care is most effective when it acts as a complement to therapeutic interventions, creating a holistic support system for individuals experiencing mental health challenges.

[51] Vanier, Jean. *Becoming Human*. Toronto: House of Anansi Press, 1998.

Community support plays a vital role in the recovery process for those with mental health issues.[52] Their findings indicate that community connections can enhance recovery outcomes, but these benefits are maximized when paired with professional mental health care. This dual approach is crucial, as individuals often require a range of therapeutic options, including psychotherapy, medication management, and psychiatric care, to effectively address their unique needs.

Communities stress the importance of person-centered interventions that respect individual preferences and situational circumstances.[53] Not everyone thrives in group settings; some individuals may prefer solitary therapy or specific therapeutic modalities. This highlights the necessity of tailoring mental health care to fit the diverse needs of individuals, ensuring that they receive the most appropriate and effective forms of support.

Community plays an effective, crucial role in supporting individuals with serious mental illnesses, combined with professional treatment.[54] They advocate for a balanced integration of community resources and professional interventions, indicating that successful mental health care requires understanding an individual's unique therapeutic needs. This balance is crucial for fostering an environment where people feel supported within a community context and through individualized professional care.

Towards a Proposed Psycho-Spiritual Framework for Higher Education's Mental Health Issue

To exemplify the potential for complementing and integrating the frameworks of Pope John Paul II and Jean Vanier, it is essential to present a diagram or conceptual framework that captures the identified convergences and divergences in their respective insights. This visual representation will aid in fostering a more comprehensive and holistic approach to understanding mental health within higher education.

The conceptual framework presented in Figure 1 outlines an integrative model that connects theology and mental health, focusing on spirituality, community, and contemplation. This model asserts that a holistic approach, drawing from faith-based and psychological insights, can enhance mental well-being and foster personal growth among college students.

Pope John Paul II's theological anthropology is central to this integration, which recognizes that human beings are created in the image and likeness of God. This perspective provides a foundational ethical lens for mental health interventions, affirming that everyone possesses inalienable dignity and must be treated with compassion, particularly in educational and therapeutic contexts. In his Theology of

[52] Phyllis Solomon, "The Role of Community in Mental Health Recovery," Psychiatric Rehabilitation Journal 27, no. 4 (2004): 392–401.

[53] World Health Organization, "World Health Report 2001 & Comprehensive Mental Health Action Plan 2013-2030."

[54] Julie Chronister, Sandra Fitzgerald, and Chih-Chin Chou, "The Meaning of Social Support for Persons with Serious Mental Illness: A Family Member Perspective.," *Rehabilitation Psychology* 66, no. 1 (February 2021): 87–101, https://doi.org/10.1037/rep0000369.

the Body, John Paul II emphasizes that "only the body is capable of making visible what is invisible: the spiritual and the divine,"[55] highlighting the profound connection between the physical and spiritual aspects of human identity.

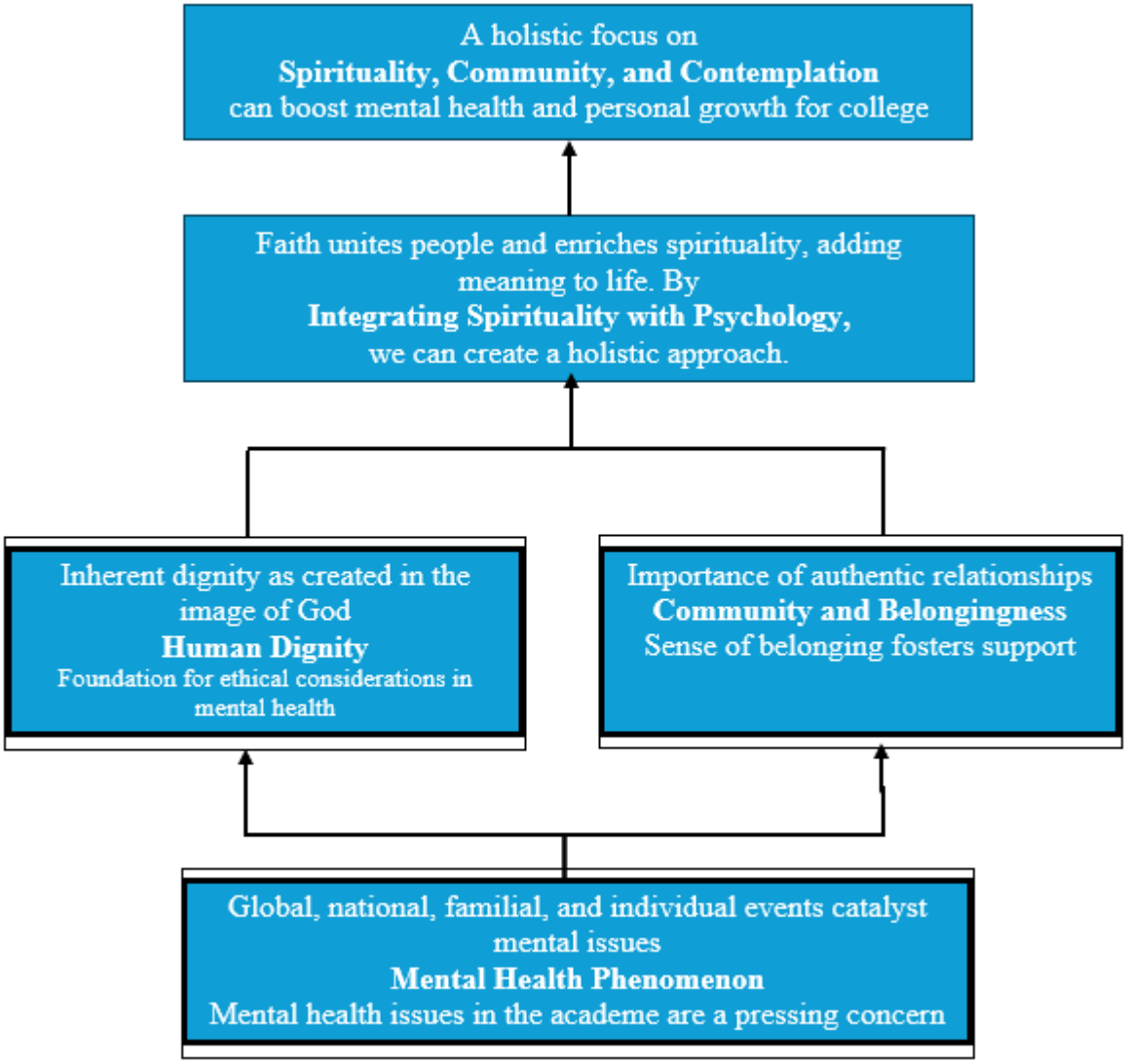


Figure 1: *Conceptual framework diagram of the integration of theology and mental health in higher education.*

Complementing this idea is Jean Vanier's work in the L'Arche communities, which stresses the importance of authentic relationships and communal belonging as vital components of psychological resilience and healing. Vanier's emphasis on vulnerability, shared humanity, and community life aligns with the framework's focus on community and belongingness, underscoring the role of relational support in addressing mental health challenges. Vanier writes, "Each of us needs to belong, not

[55] John Paul II, Man and Woman He Created Them: A Theology of the Body, Michael trans. Waldstein (Boston: Pauline Books and Media, 2006), 203.

just to one person but to a family, friends, a group, and a culture,"[56] emphasizing the essential nature of belonging in human development.

The broader context of the mental health phenomenon within the framework acknowledges the complexities of mental health in higher education, where global crises, family dynamics, and academic pressures intersect. These psychological and theological insights form a psycho-spiritual model that holistically addresses students' needs, advocating for a culture of care, belonging, and ethical responsibility within academic institutions.

In Europe, at least, spiritual approaches to mental illness are still relatively new. The question of whether to incorporate spirituality into the treatment of individuals with mental illness is still up for debate, primarily because of worries about the negative consequences of promoting and facilitating religious participation. However, there is mounting evidence that spiritual and religious approaches to mental health issues have positive effects. One of the distinctive human dimensions is spirituality, which 1) makes life sacred and meaningful, 2) is crucial to the doctor-patient interaction, and 3) aids in the healing process.[57]

Mental health also has an impact on 'functional health'[58]. Depression and low self-esteem can lead to neglect of health, including poor eating habits, social isolation, and physical inactivity (Lenze et al., 2001). On the other hand, positive mental health impacts functional health through exercise, good nutrition, and a support system. In a study, women with cardiovascular disease who had high levels of self-esteem were more likely to maintain or improve functioning than those with lower self-esteem.[59]

Our contemporary world strongly needs the weak (vulnerable) as they evangelize, transform, and help us be more human. They help us discover that the good news of Jesus is announced not to those who serve the poor but to those who are themselves poor and need God's merciful love and forgiveness.[60] Pope Benedict XVI addressed, remembering Josef Pieper's famed statement, "It is good that you exist," to caution against the disremembering of the spirituality of celebrating World Youth Days, which is joy.[61] It is only when life has been accepted and is perceived as accepted that it also becomes acceptable. Man is that strange creature that needs physical birth and appreciation to subsist. If an individual is to accept himself, someone must say to

[56] Jean Vanier, Becoming Human (Mahwah, New Jersey: House of Anansi Press, Inc, 1998), 35.

[57] René Hefti, "Integrating Religion and Spirituality into Mental Health Care, Psychiatry and Psychotherapy," *Religions* 2, no. 4 (November 2, 2011): 611–27, https://doi.org/10.3390/rel2040611.

[58] Functional health refers to the ability to take care of personal needs such as bathing, toileting, and dressing, as well as tending to other tasks of everyday life, including shopping, paying bills, using the telephone, and navigating the physical and social environment.

[59] Sheila Hayes, "*Health, Illness, and Optimal Aging: Biological and Psychosocial Perspectives* by Carolyn M. Aldwin and Diane Fox Gilmer," *Journal of Hospital Librarianship* 15, no. 3 (July 3, 2015): 193, https://doi.org/10.1080/15323269.2015.1049074.

[60] Dorota Kornas-Biela, "Jean Vanier and L'Arche as a Witness of Merciful Love," *Journal for Perspectives of Economic Political and Social Integration* 23, no. 1–2 (December 20, 2017): 195–208, https://doi.org/10.1515/pepsi-2017-0010.

[61] Benedict XVI, "Address of His Holiness Benedict XVI on the Occasion of Christmas Greetings to the Roman Curia," Clementine Hall, December 22, 2011, accessed May 26, 2024, https://www.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/speeches/2011/december/documents/hf_ben-xvi_spe_20111222_auguri-curia.html.

him: "It is good that you exist." This must be said, not with words, but with that act of the entire being we call love.[62]

In response to the mental health upheaval because of the pandemic, colleges, governments, and organizations in the field of mental health have taken several measures to address the needs of the students. Mental health support arguably espouses myriad challenges. It is innate for anyone to help someone in need demonstrably. It is imperative to contemplate efficient approaches supporting every institution in this study, particularly for college students. Here are some strategies or recommendations to support the mental health of college students:[63]

1. Ensure support via helplines and online support groups - though colleges/universities are educational institutes, the focus should not be restricted to strategizing for academic curriculum, but also for students' mental well-being.
2. Consistent communication - should be established with students that is clear and compassionate, which helps students stay connected to get academic updates and feel emotionally rested. Counselors may provide emotional support to understand how the pandemic may have caused personal distress and how they have been coping (or may need support for coping).
3. Faculty members and research mentors are close to students - the time of the pandemic may challenge the staff to take on some additional responsibilities in the best interest of the students. Teachers and research mentors may help students address some of their emotional worries relevant to academics.
4. The emotional well-being of everyone on campus should be a priority - along with the well-being of students and teaching/managing professionals. The professionals working tirelessly with additional responsibilities are prone to burnout. Their well-being must be ensured with the correct number of breaks, shared responsibility, and professional support for mental well-being.
5. To cater mental health support to volunteer students - one more concern that immediately grabs attention is the burnout experience among those college students who have volunteered to provide peer mentorship and academic help, and help address emotional concerns in fellow students. Though these students may have higher grit and stress thresholds, the college must cater to the mental health support among these students (Wang et al., 2020; American Council of Education, 2020).
6. Employing a comprehensive public health approach - to ensure that mental health counseling is a part of the strategic planning of the universities and colleges. The strategic planning must include and consider the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and call upon the various campus experts to provide health literacy and strategies to promote healthy habits among students and

[62] Joseph Ratzinger, *Principles of Catholic Theology: Building Stones for a Fundamental Theology*, 2nd ed. (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1989).

[63] Pandya and Lodha, "Mental Health Consequences of COVID-19 Pandemic among College Students and Coping Approaches Adapted by Higher Education Institutions: A Scoping Review."

staff. Focusing more specifically on mental health and well-being by having mental health professionals can help students adapt better and faster.

Conclusions

The study examined the critical issue of mental health within higher education, undertaking a comprehensive review of existing literature on this multifaceted phenomenon. While substantial scholarship has sought to address mental health issues through various lenses—namely, political, social, economic, psychological, and medical—we have identified a notable gap in the literature concerning the moral and spiritual dimensions of mental illness among college students. This omission is significant, as it may hinder a holistic understanding of the mental health challenges faced by this population. Therefore, the study emerges as both timely and pertinent, as it aims to introduce an alternative perspective that encompasses the moral and spiritual aspects of mental health in higher education.

The first part of the study illustrated the significant contributions of Pope John Paul II, especially his focus on the human person as made in the image and likeness of God, which emphasizes the inherent value and worth of each person, irrespective of mental health status. This assertion of dignity can empower students to better cope with challenges with greater self-compassion and understanding of their situation. In addition, as expressed by John Paul II, an awareness of the possibility of spiritual development in suffering is not just a theoretical concept but a powerful tool that can offer a structure for students to identify meaning and purpose even through challenging experiences. This emphasis on spiritual growth in adversity can encourage and motivate students to face their challenges positively.

The second part underscored the values of L'Arche, established by Jean Vanier, as it provides a robust model for building inclusive and supportive communities within the college environment. These values, which emphasize relationships of mutual respect, understanding, and shared life, can be a source of belonging and support for students facing mental health issues.

The third section elucidated the deficiencies within both frameworks regarding the mental health phenomenon among college students. Recognizing this matter is crucial for constructing a more comprehensive and holistic approach to addressing mental health within this demographic. The study's intention in highlighting the shortcomings of each framework is not to discredit, but rather to emphasize the urgency of Pope John Paul II's philosophically significant concern regarding mental health in this context. It is pertinent to note that the methodology did not seek to ascertain which framework holds superiority; instead, we posited that each framework possesses the capacity to complement the other, as they provide distinct alternatives to understanding the phenomenon in question. This integrative perspective aligns with the efforts of Pope John Paul II, who, then known as Karol Wojtyta, sought to merge phenomenological and Thomistic methodologies in his quest to gain a deeper understanding of the nature and attributes of the human person, which he called

'personalism'. Notably, the study illustrated that complementing or integrating the relevant aspects of the two prominent figures in the study of the human person, particularly concerning mental health, can provide a valuable approach to addressing mental health issues among college students.

In a nutshell, incorporating the theological teachings of Pope John Paul II and Jean Vanier into the support structures that are in place for college students can significantly improve their overall well-being. Creating a culture of compassion, inclusivity, and spiritual development can assist students in overcoming the challenges of higher education and becoming well-rounded individuals who are well-suited to succeed in all areas of their lives. Integrating different branches of science will help to attain a significant understanding of human persons and help them achieve lasting fulfillment by adequately attending to their transcendental, religious, and spiritual needs. Moreover, this partnership between theology, spirituality, religion, and other social and health sciences can provide the conceptual and empirical tools to craft and evaluate interventions.[64]

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