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C.C.H. NEWSLETTER

CATHOLIC COMMISSION FOR THE HANDICAPPED
4472 Lindell Blvd.--St. Louis, MO 63108
(314) 533-3454

Vol. VII, No. 3

JUL.- AUG.- SEP. 1988

From July 24-28, in Portland, Oregon, the National Catholic Office for Persons with Disabilities (NCPD) held its fifth national conference --

CELEBRATE & CHALLENGE.

In this newsletter we would like to share with you the events of that conference.

CELEBRATE ...

The conference was indeed a celebration. Balloons, banners, a song, special entertainment, awards, beautiful liturgies and prayer services accompanied the extraordinary people gathered to mark this event. The closing liturgy, a liturgy of Re-commitment, was a moving experience as so many

renewed their commitment to their brothers and sisters with disabilities.

At the celebration banquet, recognition was given to the persons who were advisors in the writing of the Bishops' Pastoral Statement--among them, Msgr. Elmer Behrmann, who is the Chairperson for the Catholic Commission for the Handicapped. At that event, our Commission received an honorary award for our PROJECT ACCESS from the J.C. Penney and the National Organization on Disability. Sr. Grace Krieger accepted the award for the Commission.

Entertainment included a fine production of "My Fair Lady" by PHAME (Physically Handicapped Actors & Musical Entertainers). After the celebration banquet, a

Celebrate and Challenge

10th Anniversary

Pastoral Statement of U.S. Catholic Bishops on Handicapped People
November 16, 1978 - November 16, 1988

CELEBRATE all that has been accomplished in the ten years since the issuance of the Pastoral Statement of U.S. Catholic Bishops on Handicapped People, and respond to the remaining **CHALLENGES** to enable full participation of people with disabilities in the life and service of the Church.

special performance was given by Tony Melendez, the young guitarist and composer, who shared his gift of music with the Pope during the youth celebration in Los Angeles. Tony's performance opened with a video of our Holy Father's warm response to Tony's gift. Tony was born without arms and plays the guitar with his feet. At the closing dinner, we were entertained by the Rollin' Squares, a wheelchair square dance group.

The conference program was filled with talks and workshops. Each one reflected on what is to be celebrated but focused even more on the challenges to be met.

2 ... and CHALLENGE

The keynote address was given by Bishop John Snyder of St. Augustine, Florida, who is a founding board member of NCPD and was instrumental in the issuance of the pastoral statement. Bishop Snyder noted that the theme of the conference invites us to look back and remember, and CELEBRATE. But then we must realize the journey is not completed and never will be, and that is our CHALLENGE. We are all involved in writing another chapter in the Jesus story.

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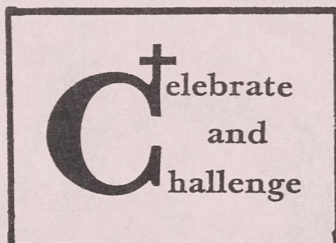
Rev. Ray Carey, a pastoral consultant for the Archdiocese of Portland, spoke of GENEROSITY AND HOSPITALITY AT THE HEART OF MINISTRY. He pointed out that Jesus is at the heart of the pastoral statement--we should look through the eyes of Jesus when we talk about generosity and hospitality in the ministry. Father Carey reflected on the word, SHALOM, which means perfection, wholeness, integrity, perfect harmony, sense of "all is well," the work of God in the world. The work of God operates on four levels of relationship--with oneself, with one's neighbor, with one's environment, with God. Our God is bent on our own good. We are more welcome to God's hospitality and generosity than we can ever imagine. Our God is YES to us--in love with us. Father indicated the criteria by which to measure ourselves as an instrument of SHALOM: absolute enthusiasm for the coming of the Kingdom of God, conversion of heart as a way of life, respect for persons, loving service of one's brothers and sisters reciprocated (receiving ministry as well as giving), and prayer without ceasing.

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Rev. Brian Doran, Pastor of Holy Angels Church of the Deaf in Los Angeles, presented, WHAT CAN I DO FOR MY CHURCH?, challenging persons with disabilities to service. As a person who has a disability, Father stated that one gift of the pastoral statement is that many persons with disabilities now stand up to admit to the disability--persons with disabilities have begun to accept themselves. This is one cause for celebration. But the pastoral statement demands a lot of action.

Presently there is a lot of emphasis on

power and empowerment. The Church's value is service and there can be a conflict between power and service. Father warned of the desire for power which prevents a person from serving. For the most part, persons with disabilities live on the fringe of the Church, society, and family. They can serve the Church if they can become comfortable living on the fringe but telling



ing the rest of the Church what life on the fringe is like. Jesus is the model for a person living on the fringe. Father Doran pointed out that no one ever gets used to their disability. People want persons with disabilities to say they've overcome their disability, when telling about the current problem with the disability is one of the real gifts persons with disabilities have to share.

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Wayne Ball, a seminarian with the diocese of Richmond, Virginia, who has been ordained a deacon, addressed the topic, PAIN AND POTENTIAL: THE THEOLOGY STATEMENT. Deacon Ball, who has cerebral palsy, noted that the pastoral statement says a lot about persons with disabilities but not too much to persons with disabilities. It credits persons with disabilities with a special insight into the meaning of life because they live "in the shadow of the cross." Mr. Ball prefers John's Gospel which shows the cross as Christ's glorification. Then persons with disabilities would be seen as standing within the light of the cross. Persons with disabilities must go through the death/resurrection experience. The last stage of the "death and dying" process is acceptance and that is the stage that the Gospel opens up to us. Jesus gives people hope and a challenge--not just resignation. Rather than trying to "overcome one's disability," it is better to be able to step back and look at oneself as a whole human being (which includes the disability). Disability is--can be--a sacramental sign. I am complete as I am--as I am supposed to be complete. Non-disabled persons look at disabled persons with fear, for persons with disabilities mirror the brokenness we all have within ourselves. Persons with disabilities remind people that they cannot control

this world. Karl Rahner describes God as the absolute Uncontrollable. Faith is a trust in the Uncontrollable. Persons with disabilities are forced to come to this recognition before others. That is the gift persons with disabilities have to offer. We need to be happy with who we are.

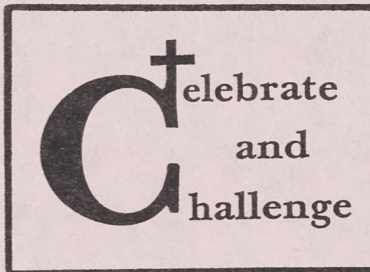
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Attention was then drawn to the pastoral statement itself through a general session entitled, CREATIVE METHODS FOR TEACHING THE PASTORAL STATEMENT, presented by Loretta Garing, an NCPD Board Member and Vice-President of the Victorious Missionaries Board of Directors, and Sr. Robin Connell, Director of Deaf Ministry in the Diocese of San Antonio, Texas. The presenters stressed that mandatory implementation is very different from creative implementation, which comes from the heart. A tool becomes effective only when put into the hands of a loving person for sharing. Various tools for implementation were named.

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The final session of the conference was entitled, THE NEXT TEN YEARS. In this session, a panel of persons representing various disabilities shared their past and present experience of the Church and their hopes for the Church of the future. They presented the following challenges to the Church:

- o o o That the Church be the leader in the integration and acceptance of persons with disabilities.
- o o o That the Church take the courage to walk the road with persons with disabilities and give hope.
- o o o 1) That the Church remove Scripture passages such as Luke 14:12-14 from the liturgy or modify them to reflect today's experience of persons with disabilities.
- o o o 2) That we give persons who are blind the opportunity to do their share and become one with others in the Church.
- o o o That the Church implement the Bishops' pastoral statement to persons with mental illness. This means to:
 - 1) Listen
 - 2) Welcome



- 3) Affirm their good
- 4) Assure access to programs and parish life.
- 5) Provide continuing education for clergy and pastoral ministers
- 6) Review current response to persons with mental illness and their families
- 7) Recognize and extend prayerful support
- 8) Develop patterns of relationship
- 9) Provide education about mental illness in dioceses
- 10) Collaborate with others for this.

o o o That the Church provide for the needs of developmentally disabled persons.

- 1) Educational--religious education programs, sacramental preparation, special education classes in regular elementary and high schools,
- 2) Social--formation of parent groups, more social activities for persons with developmental disabilities, integration in youth groups, establishment of group homes.

o o o That the Church work together for the concerns of persons who are deaf:

- 1) Keep deaf schools open and growing
- 2) Provide a church for the deaf.

o o o That the Church make sure that ministry with disabled persons is in the budget so we can CONTINUE the ministry and GROW.

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After these final challenges, the conference closed with a slide presentation showing what is being done in dioceses throughout the U.S., accompanied by the singing of the SONG OF HOPE:

AND THE DOORS ARE OPEN WIDE TO WELCOME YOUR PEOPLE, LORD
AND OUR HEARTS ARE OPEN WIDE TO THE GIFTS OF ALL
HEAR OUR SONG OF HOPE FOR THE BUILDING OF YOUR KINGDOM, OUR GOD
LET THE EARTH BE FILLED
LET THE EARTH BE FILLED
LET THE EARTH BE FILLED WITH NEW WONDERS OF YOUR LOVE.

(Song composed in commemoration of the 10th Anniversary of the Bishops' Pastoral Statement by Kent Ludwigsen and Dorothy Coughlin)

CONGRATULATIONS TO

MERCEDES SPILLER, who was inducted into the Order of Distinguished Older Missourians on May 27 in Jefferson City. The award was co-sponsored by the Division of Aging and the Governor's Advisory Council on Aging. Mrs. Spiller is one of the Coordinators of the Handicapped at Saint Francis Xavier Parish.

DAYS TO REMEMBER

- Sep. 25 - Oct. 1 DEAF AWARENESS WEEK
Oct. 2 LEADERSHIP DEAF WORKSHOP at Saint Louis Community College at Meramec, 8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. Write Jeff Stafford, P.O. Box 567, Granite City, IL 62040.
Oct. 2-8 MENTAL ILLNESS AWARENESS WEEK
Oct. 9-12 NATIONAL CONFERENCE sponsored by the Victorious Missionaries in Belleville. Call 241-3400 X2281.
Oct 21-23 H.E.C. (HANDICAPPED ENCOUNTER CHRIST). Call Maureen Rauscher 771-6166.
Nov. 27 DISABILITY RIGHTS SUNDAY
May 31-June 4, 1989 FIFTH INTERNATIONAL POLIO AND INDEPENDENT LIVING CONFERENCE at Sheraton Hotel, St. Louis. Call G.I.N.I. 361-0475.
RETREAT FOR SHUT-INS - Every Saturday. Call 837-4939.
VICTORIOUS MISSIONARIES - Belleville: every first Saturday. Call 241-3400 X2281, Voice/TDD. St. Louis: every third Saturday. Call Nancy Schuette 962-4138.
MASSES FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES - Second Saturday, at St. Christopher, 10:30 a.m. Call James Mueller 839-3266.
SIGNED MASSES FOR HEARING IMPAIRED - Every Sunday. Call 535-5222 Voice and 535-0154 TDD for schedule and location.
CATHOLIC CENTER FOR DEAF - Gateway Silent Seniors every Wednesday. Call 535-5222 Voice or 535-0154 TDD.
SHHH (SELF-HELP FOR THE HARD OF HEARING) every 2nd Saturday. Call Dave 391-7975.
FAITH AND LIGHT - Every second Sunday. Call Kathy Williamson 664-8823 in evening.

RETREAT FOR SHUT-INS

The RETREAT FOR SHUT-INS provides spiritual and social activities once a month for persons who are disabled, for those who are chronically ill, and for the elderly. The Retreat meets from 10:00-3:30 at three different sites (De Paul, St. Mary's and St. Anthony's Hospitals) on different Saturdays of the month. For more information, call Pat Goldkamp 837-4939.

ACCESS ST. LOUIS

ACCESS ST. LOUIS is a guide for providing basic information on the accessibility of area tourist facilities for persons with disabilities. It includes hotels, restaurants, community recreation centers, and recreation and tourist attractions. It is a cooperative project of the Special Recreation Council of Greater St. Louis and the Office on the Disabled for the City of St. Louis. Sites included in the guide were surveyed and had to meet American National Standard Institute (ANSI) standards of accessibility.

For a copy of ACCESS ST. LOUIS, send a self addressed envelope with 2 stamps to Office on the Disabled, City Hall Room 30, St. Louis, MO 63103; phone (314) 622-3686. Or Special Recreation Council, 7751 Carondelet, Suite 402, St. Louis, MO 63105; phone (314) 726-6044.

HARRIS FACTS

Here are some facts from a recent Louis Harris & Associates poll for the International Center for the Disabled:

- 40 percent of people over 18 with disabilities did not finish high school.
People with disabilities are three times more likely than non-disabled people to never eat in restaurants.
13 percent of the U.S. populations with disabilities never shopped in a grocery store.
LACK OF ACCESS IS THE REASON 40 PERCENT OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES DO NOT GO TO CHURCH, vote, or participate in other community activities.
The social, recreational and employment opportunities of 50 percent of people with disabilities are substantially limited due to their inability to use public transportation.



PROJECT ACCESS UPDATE

WE'RE ON OUR WAY WITH PROJECT ACCESS -- in the Archdiocese. Not only are we on our way, but, because of PROJECT ACCESS, we received one of the 3 awards given by the National Organization on Disability and the J.C. Penney Corporation, in conjunction with the U.S. Catholic Conference and the National Catholic Office for Persons with Disabilities. The panel of judges selected us for our efforts for total accessibility, both in architecture and attitude, and for our efforts in involving persons with disabilities within the archdiocese. The award was presented at the NCPD Conference in Portland in July; Sister Grace Krieger accepted it on behalf of the Commission.

Our congratulations go to the Committee who worked hard to develop PROJECT ACCESS. Commission members who devoted many hours serving on the Committee are: Colleen Starkloff, Chairperson, Denise Kincade, Mary Ann Price, Karen Sanchez, and Fr. Rich Tillman. We greatly appreciate your hard work and commitment.

PROJECT ACCESS was mailed to parishes, archdiocesan agencies, and archdiocesan

schools in June with the request for returns by mid-July. To date, there has been approximately a 25% response. We realize that summertime has its drawbacks as far as taking a survey is concerned: parish councils do not always meet during the summer, school staff is minimal in number, and key persons are away on vacation. This time of year is also the time that new pastors are settling in to their new parishes. We

"In order to highlight some of the progress that has been made in the past ten years (since the U.S. Bishops issued their Pastoral Statement on Handicapped People) and to encourage more parishes and archdiocesan institutions to address the needs of persons with disabilities, I am happy to endorse PROJECT ACCESS and to declare November 27, 1988, DISABILITY RIGHTS SUNDAY in the Archdiocese of Saint Louis."

Most Rev. John L. May, Archbishop

have learned that some parishes did not receive the PROJECT ACCESS materials and have mailed them another packet. A "gentle reminder: has just been mailed to let pastors, agency directors, and principals know that it is not too late to submit PROJECT ACCESS.

We are now in the process of compiling the survey data into a report on accessibility in the archdiocese. We are being assisted by Bud Anderhalter, Coordinator of the Handicapped at St. Monica's parish, who has devised a method of recording the data in order to computerize it. The Commission is deeply grateful to Bud and his staff.

TO BE COMPLETELY SUCCESSFUL, PROJECT ACCESS NEEDS YOUR HELP TOO.

PLEASE MARK YOUR CALENDAR

NOVEMBER 27, 1988

DISABILITY RIGHTS SUNDAY

THE PASTORAL STATEMENT AND COMMUNITY

In their Pastoral Statement, the U.S. Bishops recognize the unique gifts persons with disabilities have to offer the Church and address the need for their integration into the Christian community and their fuller participation in its life. The excerpts which follow elaborate on these themes.

The Church that Jesus founded would surely have been derelict had it failed to respond to His example in its attention to handicapped people. It remains faithful to its mission when its members become more and more a people of the Beatitudes, a people blessed in their meekness, their suffering, their thirst for righteousness. We all struggle with life. We must carry on this struggle in a spirit of mutual love, inspired by Christ's teaching that in serving others we serve the Lord Himself. (cf. Mt. 25:40). In doing so, we build a community of interdependent people and discover the Kingdom of God in our midst. (Paragraph 5)

If handicapped people are to become equal partners in the Christian community injustices must be eliminated and ignorance and apathy replaced by increased sensitivity and warm acceptance. The leaders and the general membership of the Church must educate themselves to appreciate fully the contribution handicapped people can make to the Church's spiritual life. Handicapped individuals bring with them a special insight into the meaning of life; for they live, more than the rest of us perhaps, in the shadow of the cross. And out of their experience they forge virtues, like courage, patience, perseverance, compassion and sensitivity that should serve as an inspiration to all Christians. (Par. 13)

In the case of many handicapped people, integration into the Christian community may require nothing more than issuing an invitation and pursuing it. For some others, however, full participation can only come about if the Church exerts itself to devise innovative programs and techniques. At the very least, we must undertake forms of evangelization that speak to the particular needs of the Handicapped individuals, make those liturgical adaptations which promote their active participation and provide help and services that reflect our loving concern for those with serious problems. (Par. 14)

This concern should be extended also to the families and especially the parents of handicapped people. No family is ever really prepared for the birth of a handicapped child. When such a child does come into the world, families often need strong support from their faith community. That support must remain firm with the passage of years. The path to independence for handicapped individuals can be difficult. Family members need to know that others stand with them, at least in spirit, as they help their children along this path. (Par. 15)

Full participation in the Christian Community has another important aspect that must not be overlooked. When we think of handicapped people in relation to ministry, we tend automatically to think of doing something for them. We do not reflect that they can do something for us and with us. As noted above, handicapped people can, by their example, teach the non-handicapped much about strength and Christian acceptance. Moreover, they have the same duty as all members of the community to do the Lord's work in the world, according to their God-given talents and capacity. Because handicapped individuals may not be fully aware of the contribution they can make, Church leaders should consult with them, offering suggestions on practical ways of serving. (Paragraph 17)

For most Catholics the community of believers is embodied in the local parish. The parish is the door to participation for handicapped individuals, and it is the responsibility of the pastor and lay leaders to make sure that this door is always open. We noted above the task, on occasion, may not be an easy one; involving some handicapped people in parish life may challenge the ingenuity and commitment of the entire congregation. Yet, in order to be loyal to its calling, to be truly pastoral, the parish must make sure that it does not exclude any Catholic who wishes to take part in its activities. (Par. 18)

THE PASTORAL STATEMENT AND COMMUNITY

It is essential that all forms of the liturgy be completely accessible to handicapped people, since these forms are the essence of the spiritual tie that binds the Christian community together. To exclude members of the parish from these celebrations of the life of the Church, even by passive omission, is to deny the reality of the community. Accessibility involves far more than physical alterations to parish buildings. Realistic provisions must be made for handicapped persons to participate fully in the Eucharist and other liturgical celebrations such as the sacraments of Reconciliation, Confirmation and Anointing of the Sick. The experience and needs of handicapped individuals vary, as do those of any group of people. For some with significant disabilities, special liturgies may be appropriate. Others will not require such liturgies, but will benefit if certain equipment and services are made available to them. Celebrating liturgies simultaneously in sign language enables the deaf person to enter more deeply into their spirit and meaning. Participation aids such as Mass books and hymnals in large print or Braille serve the same purpose for blind or partially sighted members. (Paragraph 23)

Handicapped people can also play a more active role in the liturgy if provided with proper aids and training. Blind parishioners can serve as lectors, for example, and deaf parishioners as special ministers of the Eucharist. We look forward to the day when more handicapped individuals are active in the full-time, professional service of the Church, and we applaud recent decisions to accept qualified candidates for ordination or the religious life in spite of their significant disabilities. (Paragraph 24)

Finally, parishes must be sensitive to the social needs of handicapped members. We have already touched on some ways in which Christians can express their concern for their handicapped brothers and sisters. These actions and others like them can help solve some of the handicapped individual's practical problems. They also create an opportunity for handicapped and non-handicapped people to join hands and break down the barriers that separate them. In such an interchange, it is often the handicapped person who gives the gift of most value. (Paragraph 26)

PRAYER FOR THE ANNIVERSARY YEAR

Creator God, we are your people. We look to the future with optimism and with Faith in You, as we pursue our call to provide justice and fullness of life for all people with disabilities.

We pray that every man, woman and child may develop their potential and meet you in themselves and in one another.

May we enjoy a totally welcoming community, with You as our center, joined hand in hand with our sisters and brothers. We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen.



Based on the Pastoral Statement of U.S. Catholic Bishops on Handicapped People

DID YOU KNOW ?

THE ST. LOUIS POLICE DEPARTMENT has a new TDD and phone number for use by the deaf in St. Louis. 444-5757 can be called in any emergency and assistance will be dispatched immediately. Deaf persons with TDD's can call 911, but the call will be automatically transferred to 444-5757.

THE REVISED NEW TESTAMENT of the NEW AMERICAN BIBLE is available on cassette from HOSANNA, 2421 Aztec Rd., N.E., Albuquerque, N.M. 87108-4224. Call Margaret Bartlett at Hosanna 1-800-542-6552.

UNIGLOBE ACTION TRAVEL, INC., located in St. Louis, specializes in travel arrangements for persons with disabilities. Call Jack Chartrand at (314) 576-9736 for list of wheelchair tours being offered or to make reservations for travel counseling and planning.

EARNING POWER IN THE HOME, a quarterly newsletter, has ideas on how to start a business from the home, whom to contact, how to get organized, how to advertise, what others are doing, and how they are doing it. For a one-year subscription, send \$4 to EARNING POWER IN THE HOME, P.O. Box 368, Weatherford, TX 76086.

THE WORLD INSTITUTE ON DISABILITY will send you a copy of "Attending in America", a report of a survey of attendant services in the U.S.A. For copies write: World Institute on Disability, 1720 Oregon St., Suite 4, Berkeley, CA 94703.

THE NATIONAL MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS SOCIETY now has an 800 MS information line. A call to 1-800-624-8236 will bring a response from a trained professional.

ST. JOHN'S MERCY REHABILITATION CENTER offers the following meetings: Spinal Cord Alumni Group (569-6040), Greater St. Louis Post-Polio Support Group (432-5074), New Strides Stroke Club (569-6945), St. Louis Bi-State Chapter of the National Head Injury Foundation (837-6928).

THE M.S. SOCIETY has arranged for VNA to provide an MS Bath Service. Funding is available for those who need financial assistance. Call the MS office for more information (314) 241-8285. Service is limited to St. Louis and St. Charles areas.

HELP FOR INCONTINENT PEOPLE, INC. (H.I.P.) publishes a quarterly newsletter for \$5.00 a year. Contact H.I.P., Inc., P.O. Box 544, Union, SC 29379 or call 803-585-8789.

A.D.E.P.T. (ASSOCIATES FOR DISABLED ENTRY PROGRAMMER TRAINING) program offers a one-year training course in business application computer programming. It is designed to serve persons with a wide range of disabilities including spinal cord injury, cerebral palsy, arthritis, and hearing and visual impairments. For information call Sandy Brooks at Goodwill (314) 371-6320.

LIGUORI's popular sacramental preparation videos (Your Baby's Baptism; Confirmation; It's Your Choice; A Child's First Penance; and A Child's First Communion) are available with open captions for deaf persons. Call (314) 464-2500.

TALKING TAPES FOR THE BLIND will acquire the Textbooks on Tape Program. It will provide greater service for the education of the individuals both groups have served. Call (314) 968-2557.



CATHOLIC COMMISSION
FOR THE HANDICAPPED
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