

**NCPD  
E-NEWS  
NOVEMBER  
2009**



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## Healthcare Reform

Congress is preparing to vote on the health care reform legislation. The USCCB has concluded that the bills are "deficient on the issues of abortion and conscience, and do not provide adequate health care for immigrants and the poor." On

November 6, 2009, the U.S. bishops sent a message to the U.S. House of Representatives requesting that a process for discussion be permitted that would allow the current law on abortion funding and the protection of conscience to be kept in place. This would require an amendment to the bill. Some members of congress are seeking to keep the bill closed off from any amendments. The letter sent to Representatives can be seen at the USCCB web site by [clicking here](#).

In order to have a voice on these laws that will have an impact for years to come, the USCCB has offered actions that can be taken regarding the health care reform legislation. All of the actions mentioned can be accessed through the home page of NCPD. ([www.ncpd.org](http://www.ncpd.org)) You can also visit the USCCB website on health care for additional information. ([Click here](#))

Thank you for any help you can give in sharing this information. Let us all keep this important issue in prayer.



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## NCPD News and Notes

### Diocese of Richmond Partners with NCPD to Host "Giftedness Gathering" Sponsored by Bon Secours

#### Richmond Health System



Most Reverend Francis X. DiLorenzo, Bishop of Richmond, welcomed some 100 guests to the diocesan pastoral

center Friday, October 30 for a presentation by the National Catholic Partnership on Disability (NCPD). Janice L. Benton, executive director of NCPD, presented a short talk and the guests were then given the premier showing of a new NCPD video, "Voices of Faith." NCPD has been working closely with Bishop DiLorenzo and Nita Grignol, Richmond's diocesan director for and with persons with disabilities. The reception and presentation brought together Richmond diocesan parish advocates for disability concerns and parishioners from nearby parishes, some from as far away as Blacksburg, Va. The purpose was to share the NCPD story and to enlist spiritual and financial support for what one guest called "the best kept secret in Catholicism - the Church's stand on people with disabilities." Bon Secours Richmond Health System sponsored the NCPD Giftedness Gathering, so named because NCPD believes every person, regardless of circumstance, has gifts to offer. JoAnn McCaffrey, DMin, Director of Mission and Diversity for Bon Secours, shared information on an innovative new employment training partnership with Virginia Commonwealth University, helping adults with autism learn skills needed for employment by health care organizations such as Bon Secours.

Guests learned how NCPD was founded by the United States Bishops Conference to implement a key church document, the *Pastoral Statement of US Catholics on People with Disabilities* ([click here](#) for full text). Though the Pastoral has been established church teaching for 30 years, many persons with physical, sensory, intellectual or developmental disabilities and those with mental illness are sometimes not fully welcomed or included. Jan Benton explained the kind of calls she receives daily from around the country from diocesan directors, clergy, families and catechists. We thank Bishop DiLorenzo and his staff, especially Nita Grignol, for their efforts in responding to NCPD's call for support and for welcoming and including NCPD in their diocese.



**Donate  
to NCPD**

NCPD provides resources, trainings and services, helping all Catholics with disabilities have access to their faith. To donate to NCPD, click the icon.

### **NCPD will be Observer and Host Breakfast at Bishops' Annual Conference**

Each November, the U.S. Catholic bishops meet to review documents, elect officers and Committee Chairs, and conduct other business of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB). NCPD executive director, Janice Benton attends the meeting as an observer, gaining an understanding of the bishops' priorities and talking with individual bishops. She will also attend a meeting of the Task Force on Health Care as a consultant. In addition, NCPD will again co-host a breakfast for bishops with the National Catholic Office for the Deaf. Each organization will have an opportunity to explain their programs and resources.



### **Diocesan/Partner News and Notes**

#### **Archbishop of Denver Gives Talk on Down Syndrome and Conscience**

Archbishop Charles J. Chaput of Denver recently addressed the Phoenix Catholic Physician's Guild on the topic of Conscience, Courage, and Children with Down Syndrome. Among the insights shared is the following: "Raising a child with Down syndrome can be hard. None of my friends who have a daughter or son with a serious disability is melodramatic, or self-conscious, or even especially pious about it. They speak about their special child with an unsentimental realism. It's a realism flowing out of love - *real* love, the kind that courses its way through fear and suffering to a decision, finally, to surround the child with their heart and trust in the goodness of God. And that decision to trust, of course, demands not just real love, but also real courage.

The real choice in accepting or rejecting a child with

special needs is never between some imaginary perfection or imperfection. The real choice is between love and *unlove*, between courage and cowardice, between trust and fear. And that's the choice we face as a society in deciding which human lives we will treat as valuable, and which we will not." He concluded with the following challenge: "We need to be the best people we can be. And, first, we need to be the best *Catholics* we can be. By our words and by our actions, we need to be witnesses. So: Speak up for what you believe. Love the Church. Defend her teaching. Trust in God. Believe in the Gospel. *And don't be afraid*. Fear is beneath your dignity as sons and daughters of the God of life. Changing the course of American culture seems like a huge task. But St. Paul felt exactly the same way. Redeeming and converting a civilization has been done once. It can be done again. But we need to understand that God is calling us to do it. He chose us. He calls us. He's waiting, and now we need to answer him."

View the full text on the following links: [Archdiocese of Denver](#) or [First Things](#).

## Several Dioceses Address Needs of Children with Autism

### Diocese of Allentown:

Sr. Janice Marie Johnson, R.S.M., Director of the Office for Ministry with Persons with Disabilities, announces the recent development of a CD entitled *Welcoming All To Liturgical Celebrations* to assist children with intellectual/developmental disabilities, including those on the autism spectrum to participate in their parish liturgies. The CD provides three templates: "This Is My Church," "Reconciliation" and "Going to Mass." Click here ([pdf](#), [Word](#)) for a description of these resources. For further information, contact Sr. Janice Marie at [JJohnson@allentowndiocese.org](mailto:JJohnson@allentowndiocese.org) or 610-289-8900.

### Diocese of Harrisburg:

The Diocese of Harrisburg will conduct a listening session on Tuesday, November 10 at the Pastoral Center to hear from families about their concerns and ideas for including people with autism into the sacraments and all aspects of parish life. Ginny Duncan, director of the Office of Ministry with People with Disabilities was quoted in a Nov. 6 article in The Patriot-News explaining that "After hearing what families need, the diocese can evaluate how best to proceed. It might be a task force, it might be training in parishes, but whatever it is, I want either persons with autism or family members of persons with autism to be involved, as the experts." [Click here](#) for full article.

### Diocese of Richmond:

The Diocese of Richmond is pleased to announce a new page on their website featuring YouTube videos of individuals with autism and family members sharing their stories. The page also includes a copy of a recent Wall Street Journal article, "Making God More Accessible," detailing how Fr. Joe Metzgar prepared a young girl with autism to receive her First Eucharist, and information on available resources. [Click here](#) to visit this page.

## Archdiocese of Washington News

Peg Kolm, Coordinator, Office of Ministry for Persons with Disabilities in the Archdiocese of Washington, shares the following news: One of the country's best ambassadors on disability issues was the late Mattie Stepanek. Mattie died five years ago, just before his 14th birthday, from a rare form of muscular dystrophy. His funeral Mass, held at St. Catherine Laboure in Wheaton, MD, was a celebration of his extraordinary life. Mattie produced six books of poetry (the *HeartSongs* series) and his last book, *Just Peace*. At his funeral, former president Jimmy Carter said he had "known kings and queens, and we've known presidents and prime ministers, but the most extraordinary person whom I have ever known in my life is Mattie Stepanek."

Jeni Stepanek, who has the same rare form of the disease, has just written a biography of her son, called

*Messenger: The Legacy of Mattie J. T. Stepanek and Heartsongs.* Jeni will speak about her son and his life's work on November 12 at 6 PM at the Catholic Information Center in downtown Washington, DC. She was interviewed on Monday (11/02) on ABC's *Good Morning America* and did a great job talking about the role of her faith in her conversation with GMA anchor Chris Cuomo; the piece can be found on Monday's home page of GMA ([click here](#)).

Learn more about Mattie and the ongoing work of Mattie's Peace Network at [www.mattieonline.com](http://www.mattieonline.com). Jeni's book will be reviewed in the Nov. 13 edition of People Magazine, and she will be interviewed for PBS Religion & Ethics Newsweekly to air the weekend of November 13-15.

### **Inclusion Tip: Supporting Returning War Veterans** ([Word version](#), [pdf version](#))



Marsha Rivas, the Director of Equal Access Ministry from the Diocese of Toledo, has put out another important tip sheet this month. Major John Morris who served as a military chaplain in Iraq is cited stating, "The road home from war is longer, steeper and often more challenging than the road to war for most soldiers and their families." In it are suggestions on how to: 1) Make your parish "military friendly", 2) Reach out to military families, 3) Reach out to deployed soldiers, 4) When a soldier comes home, welcome them, 5) Support beyond the yellow ribbon, 6) Be alert for signs of distress. The tip sheet also includes a full page of website resources.

Chaplain Major John Morris can be heard on an interview on public radio by [clicking here](#). A pdf on *Returning from the War Zone: A Guide for Families of Military Members* can be downloaded by [clicking here](#).

### **The National Catholic Office for the Deaf announces a new video resource:**

*Sacrament of Reconciliation*, a program consisting of a DVD with lesson plans to assist in preparing individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing for the Sacrament of Reconciliation, was produced by the National Catholic Office for the Deaf. The program was specifically created for students who are preparing for their initial reception of the Sacrament of Reconciliation. All or part of the lessons and DVD can also be used to review or reinforce the understanding of the Sacrament of Reconciliation for individuals who have already received the sacrament. This program is versatile and can be used by a catechist or parent in conjunction with the parish religion book or can be used as the primary text for immediate preparation for Reconciliation. The DVD/Video is in American Sign Language (ASL) with English captions and voice over in spoken English.

Visit the NCOD website for ordering information by [clicking here](#). To view a pdf on the resource [click here](#).

### **Pathways Awareness Sponsors Inclusion Awareness Day and Announces 2009 Open Heart Grant Awardees**

The weekend of October 11, Pathways Awareness sponsored Inclusion Awareness Day in the Archdiocese of Chicago. Parishes were asked to plan worship services, homilies, activities and bulletin articles that focus on the gifts received when worshippers of all abilities can participate in parish life every day of the year. The 2009 [Roman Catholic Inclusion Awareness Day Workbook](#) provides ready-to-use bulletin articles, prayers of the faithful, homily hints and more to assist parishes with year-round awareness efforts. The [Inclusion Awareness Day Prayer Card](#) is available in English, Spanish and Polish for downloading and printing from the Pathways website.

Fourteen congregations across the U.S., including eleven Catholic parishes, received Pathways Awareness Open Hearts Awards - up to \$1,000 cash grants for their efforts to welcome and include worshippers with disabilities. Examples of projects supported by 2009 Open Hearts Award grants include providing Braille worship aides, making sign language interpreters available during religious services, making washrooms more accessible, adding an automatic door to a ramped entrance, purchasing and distributing inclusion in worship materials to educate congregations, providing a classroom aide for an inclusive kindergarten class, constructing an interior ramp, and providing accessible transportation to worship services. [Click here](#) for a listing of the winning congregations.

Pathways Awareness is a national non-profit organization dedicated to raising awareness about the benefit of early detection and early therapy for children with early motor delays, as well as assisting congregations of all faith traditions to welcome persons with disabilities into all aspects of faith life.

### ***Bioethics and Public Policy Report***

Dr. Marie Hilliard, Director of Bioethics and Public Policy for the National Catholic Bioethics Center, edits their monthly *Bioethics and Public Policy Report*. [Click here](#) to view an archive of these reports. Dr. Hilliard is also a member of NCPD's Board of Directors, and Chairs the Board Committee on Ethics and Public Policy.

### **Year for Priests-Vatican Official Asks People Who Are Sick to Offer Their Sufferings for Priests**

Zenit.org recently shared the following news: In an October 1 letter to people who are ill, the president of the Pontifical Council for Health Care Ministry, Archbishop Zygmunt Zimowski, urged them to offer their sufferings for the holiness of priests. He stated, "I am near to each one of you and I invite you, dear sick brothers and sisters, to unceasingly address your prayers and the offering up of your sufferings to the Lord of life for the holiness of your well loved priests, so that they can with devotion and pastoral charity perform the ministry that is entrusted to them by Christ."

He asked that they pray for several additional intentions - for a pilgrimage for hospital chaplains, scheduled next April to Lourdes and Ars; for priests who are likewise sick and experience the weight of pain; for the Holy Father, bishops and priests; and for the beatification and canonization of Servant of God John Paul II.

Archbishop Zimowski also reflected on priests who care for those who are sick: "A priest at the bedside of a sick person represents Christ himself, the Divine Physician, who is not indifferent to the fate of those who suffer...In the person of the priest is thus present at the side of the sick person Christ himself who forgives, heals, comforts, takes that person by the hand and says: 'I am the resurrection and the life; who believes in me, even though he dies, will live; whoever lives and believes in me will never die.'"

## **Legislation/Federal Government News and Notes**

### **Access Board Teams with Regional ADA Centers to Conduct Webinar Series**

The Access Board ([click here](#)) will conduct a series of webinars and audio conferences on different topics of accessibility over the coming year in cooperation with the national network of regional ADA Centers, also known as the Disability and Business Technical Assistance Centers (DBTACs). The series will cover a variety of topics on accessibility pertaining to the built environment, information and communication technologies, and transportation. The sessions will be conducted on a monthly basis with most scheduled for 90 minutes.



The first webinar, to be held December 3rd from 2:30 to 4:00 (ET), will cover draft final guidelines for outdoor developed areas, including trails, picnic and camping facilities, and beach access routes. The next webinar will provide an overview of the work of the Board and is scheduled for January 7th. Webinar attendees will be able to earn continuing education credits. General attendance is free, but a \$25 fee will be charged for processing continuing education credits. The subjects and schedule for subsequent webinars have not been finalized. The Board welcomes

suggestions from the public for desired webinar topics. Further details, including registration instructions, are posted on the Board's website at <http://www.access-board.gov/news/webinars.htm>. Questions or requested webinar subjects should be directed to Peggy Greenwell at [training@access-board.gov](mailto:training@access-board.gov), (202) 272-0017 (v), or (202) 272-0082 (TTY).

*Tentative future topics include* the ADA and ABA guidelines, public rights-of-way, toilet and bathing facilities, accessible routes, compliance in Recovery Act projects, information and communications technology, and transportation vehicles.

### **EEOC Proposes Changes to its ADA Regulations**

The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) is proposing changes to its regulations under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) to clarify who is covered by the law's protections against discrimination in employment and hiring practices. These revisions are based on amendments to the law passed by Congress last year. The "ADA Amendments Act of 2008," which became effective on January 1st, was passed to simplify and broaden the law's coverage.

Consistent with the Amendments Act, EEOC's proposed changes revise or interpret terms defining what constitutes a "disability" under the law. These revisions are intended to make it easier for those seeking protection to establish that they have a disability and qualify under the law. In addition, the proposed changes stipulate that mitigating measures, including assistive devices, auxiliary aids, accommodations, medical therapies and supplies (other than eyeglasses and contact lenses), have no bearing in determining whether a disability qualifies under the law. The revisions also clarify coverage of impairments that are episodic or in remission that substantially limit a major life activity when active, such as epilepsy or post traumatic stress disorder. The proposed rule is available for public comment until November 23, 2009. During the comment period, EEOC and the Department of Justice's Civil Rights Division will hold town hall meetings in Oakland, Philadelphia, Chicago, and New Orleans to share information and to gather comments. For further information, visit EEOC's website by [clicking here](#). EEOC's proposed rule as published in the Federal Register is available online at <http://edocket.access.gpo.gov/2009/E9-22840.htm>.

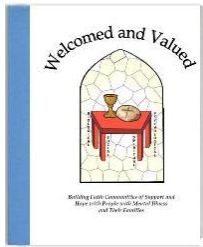


### **Home Modification Grants for Veterans**

Veterans or Service Members who have certain service-connected disabilities may be entitled to a [grant](#) from the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to construct an adapted home or modify an existing home to meet their adaptive needs. The goal of the Specially Adapted Housing (SAH) Grant Program is to provide a barrier-free living environment that allows the Veteran or Service Member to live independently. An [application form](#) can be downloaded from the VA's Web site.

## Resources

### NCPD Mental Illness Resources



The NCPD *Welcomed and Valued* DVD and Resource Binder are available for purchase by [clicking here](#). The DVD features in depth looks at people with mental illness and how they participate in parish life. (27 minute open captioned DVD. Discussion guide included.)



### NCPD Webinar Resources

To view the resources available from each webinar, [click here](#) to be taken to the webinar home page and select the webinar you are interested in. The resources are listed at the bottom of each webinar page. Archived versions of the webinars can be viewed, and transcripts are provided.

### **Catechetical Leader on Ministering with Persons who are Deaf or Disabled.**

The National Conference for Catechetical Leaders (NCCL) has extra copies available of its September-October bonus issue of Catechetical Leader featuring articles on Ministering with Persons who are Deaf or Disabled. It is being offered to NCCL members at a discounted rate of \$4.50 per copy and quantity discounts are available on request. In addition, internet resources are available at [On-Line Resources](#). For more information or to order, contact Pat Dudley at [pdudley@nccl.org](mailto:pdudley@nccl.org).



### **Sign up now for Pflaum FREE Gospel Weeklies Newsletter**



Pflaum Publishing is offering a free monthly electronic newsletter featuring student activities for preschool through junior high, practical teacher tips, ideas to share with parents and much more. The newest issue highlights teaching ideas for November 1, the Feast of All Saints, through November 29, the First Sunday of Advent. [Sign up](#) today for this valuable free resource.

## Calendar of Events

**Tuesday, December 1 - Thursday December 10, 2009**

### **A Pilgrimage to the Holy Land - Xavier Society for the Blind**

Fr. John Sheehan will lead a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, designed specifically for people who are blind or visually impaired. For more details, contact the Xavier Society by Email at [Xaviersocietyfortheblind@Yahoo.com](mailto:Xaviersocietyfortheblind@Yahoo.com) or call (212) 473-7800.

**Friday January 15 - Tuesday January 19, 2010**

### **NCOD Pastoral Week, "Call of the Spirit"**

Houston, TX.

Visit <http://www.ncod.org/PastoralWeek2008.asp> for more details.

**Tuesday, February 16, 2010, 3-4:00 p.m. EDT**

### **NCPD Webinar: *Access in Catholic Education Part II: High Schools***

In partnership with the:

USCCB Secretariat on Catholic Education and

National Conference for Catechetical Leadership (NCCL)

Marie Powell, Moderator

Dr. Karen Tichy and Doreen C. Engel, MA, Presenters

[Click here](#) for a flyer and registration.

**July 25 - July 30, 2010**

### **Holley Family Village's Catholic Family Week**

Brooklyn, Michigan

This program focuses on Catholic families with persons who are deaf who want to deepen their faith as a FAMILY while having a good time at beautiful De Sales Center.

Cost: \$400 to \$700 depending on the size of family.

Scholarships available for families who need financial assistance.

We will accept 12 families. If interested, please mark the dates in your calendar book!

Brochures for Catholic Family Week will be available in January 2010.

Please contact Fr. Mike Depcik at [Depcik@desales.org](mailto:Depcik@desales.org) if you have questions.

**Sunday August 1 - Friday August 6, 2010**

### **Holley Family Village's Deaf Catholic Youth Week**

Brooklyn, Michigan

This program focuses on deaf teens aged 13 - 18 who want to deepen their Catholic faith while having a good time at beautiful De Sales Center. Non-Catholic teens are welcome as long as they are willing to participate in our religious services.

Cost: \$200 or \$250 (to be determined)

Scholarships available for individuals who need financial assistance. We will accept 20 teens.

Brochures for Deaf Catholic Youth Week and other programs will be available in January 2010.

Please contact Fr. Mike Depcik at [Depcik@desales.org](mailto:Depcik@desales.org) if you have questions.

**Tuesday, August 17, 2010 - Saturday, August 28, 2010**

### **STAUROS *Access to the Land of the Bible***

Holy Land Pilgrimage for people with physical disabilities, especially those actively engaged in parish Bible Study or ministry who wish to deepen their understanding of the Bible. Open to spouses, family members, friends, or to any persons who wish to serve as personal care attendants. [Click here](#) for more information.

## Our Mission:

**Rooted in Gospel values that affirm the dignity of every person, the National Catholic Partnership on Disability (NCPD) works collaboratively to ensure meaningful participation of people with disabilities in all aspects of the life of the Church and society.**

Visit our Website: [www.ncpd.org](http://www.ncpd.org)

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Our goal with NCPD E-NEWS is to be brief, timely, and relevant. We trust that you'll look forward to these postings, read them, and pass them on. We count on your feedback. NCPD Director of Programs, Dr. Nancy Thompson, edits NCPD E-NEWS. Please submit items for consideration to her at [nthompson@ncpd.org](mailto:nthompson@ncpd.org) using the phrase "E-NEWS Submission" or "E-NEWS Response" in the subject line.

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