



NATIONAL CATHOLIC PARTNERSHIP ON DISABILITY
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
November 7, 2014

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Loyola Press “Opening Doors” Award Winner Announced

The National Catholic Partnership on Disability, in partnership with Loyola Press, is pleased to announce **St. John Neumann Parish in Lilburn, Georgia** as the winner of this year’s Loyola Press Parish Award.

It was a difficult decision to make as all of the nominated parishes have accomplished excellent work for the greater inclusion of people with disabilities and their families. The judges want to express their gratitude to all of the applicants and to congratulate them on the strides they have made towards equality and acceptance of those with disabilities with regards to faith life.

St. John Neumann Parish has gone above and beyond to make their sacred space accessible to all who worship there. The sacred space maintains its beauty and purpose while being accessible to all and allows for persons with physical disabilities to worship and minister at their parish. It is not a separate space or program; it is an organic part of the church and the community.

Janice Benton, Executive Director of NCPD, has been to the parish and can speak to the beauty as well as the accessibility. “The parish of St. John Neumann has truly spared no effort to make their church accessible to the last detail. They have done this in effort to ensure that today, but also in the future, priests and parishioners can access and continue their ministry at the altar.”

In addition to these physical alterations, the parish of St. John Neumann truly embodies a spirit of inclusion. Through parish social events, accommodations for children in religious education, providing American Sign Language every Sunday, and facilitating community integration and participation for parishioners, it is apparent that this parish is truly a home and a place of support.

Judge Erica Cohen Moore notes, “As a judge, I enjoyed the opportunity to learn more about what other parishes are doing throughout the country to welcome our brothers and sisters living with disabilities. The parish grant applicants each brought a creative approach to welcoming others, whether it be physical accommodations, welcoming liturgies or fellowship where all are welcome at the table. Our parish communities are clearly moving in the direction of saying ‘yes.’”

The annual Loyola Press Opening Doors Award looks to highlight the work of Catholics across the country who are “opening doors” to all, regardless of circumstance. While there were many wonderful applications this year, the parish of St. John Neumann impressed the judging committee with its holistic approach to service of Catholics with disabilities within a faith community. The parish will receive from Loyola Press \$1000 and a plaque.

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Loyola Press is a Catholic publishing company providing materials and resources for catechists as well as all Catholics to grow in a greater knowledge and understanding of their faith. Loyola Press has been active in facilitating greater inclusion for people with disabilities in the church through their adaptive sacramental preparation kits. Their mission, as appears on their website (loyolapress.com) states, “as an apostolate of the Chicago-Detroit Province of the Society of Jesus (commonly known as the Jesuits), Loyola Press embraces the Jesuit passion for helping people to find God in all things. We continue the Jesuit tradition of service through the printed word and by being ‘people for others.’”

Since 1982, the National Catholic Partnership on Disability (NCPD) has served the U.S. Catholic Church by providing resources, training, consultation and advocacy for the estimated 14 million U.S. Catholics who live with disability.

Visit www.ncpd.org for more information on NCPD’s programs and services.