



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Loyola Press 2015 “Opening Doors” Award Winner Announced

The National Catholic Partnership on Disability (NCPD), in partnership with Loyola Press, is pleased to announce St. John Chrysostom Parish in Wallingford, Pennsylvania, Archdiocese of Philadelphia, as the winner of this year’s *Loyola Press Opening Doors Parish Award*. The parish will receive from Loyola Press \$1000 and a plaque.

Three judges, representing the Archdioceses of Atlanta and Portland in Oregon, and the Diocese of Toledo, selected St. John Chrysostom Parish after reviewing numerous applications from across the United States. In their review, the judges looked at ways parishes demonstrate a deep commitment to parishioners with disabilities, providing access for full participation in all aspects of parish life: sacramental, catechetical, social, ministerial, and community service.

In 2014, the pastor of St. John Chrysostom, Rev. Edward J. Hallinan, sought out families who were missing from Sunday Mass, families whose children looked and behaved differently at Mass and parish events. After hearing their stories of isolation and pain, Father Hallinan challenged St. John Chrysostom to become a faith community that would genuinely welcome all; where families could worship in an atmosphere of warmth; and where all children could participate fully in the Sacraments.

Now a parishioner leads their ministry with persons with disabilities, which developed a mission statement and four areas of focus. Their adapted religious education program, now in its second year, draws new families to the parish. One regularly-scheduled Sunday Mass each month is adapted especially for worshippers who need accommodations like reduced lighting, low-gluten hosts, and sign-language interpretation. The mass also features persons with disabilities in ministerial roles on and off the altar.

NCPD Board Chair, Sr. Kathleen Schipani, IHM, offered these congratulations to St. John Chrysostom Parish: “The parish staff and parishioners are a wonderful model of including all people in their parish family. What I especially admire is their planning process which includes people with disabilities and their family members. What I also find very impressive is how they reach out to group homes in their parish boundaries; an area that is so often overlooked. They are a shining model of what parish ministry can be with persons with disabilities.”

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By granting this award to St. John Chrysostom, NCPD and Loyola Press hope to show parishes large and small, old and new, that sowing seeds of welcome to persons with disabilities and making accommodations for all to partake at the Lord's Table produces a bountiful harvest that nourishes the entire parish.

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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 and the Adaptive Finding God curriculum. 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.