

# Prayers for Various Occasions in Disability Ministry

## Commemorating Bishops Proclamation

Loving God,

You make each living person in your image  
...Your gift of love and commitment to the human race  
...A seed to build a community of interdependence and respect for all life

As we celebrate the U.S. bishops' proclamation of welcome and inclusion,  
open our hearts to their words  
Commit us to their proclamation that "There can be no separate Church for people with disabilities. We are one flock."

Guide our hands to build access and welcome  
Guide our minds to understand the power and wisdom of human vulnerability  
Guide our actions to create parish communities open to the gifts of each individual  
Give us courage to stand up to the forces willing to destroy life because they fear disability or make judgments about its "quality."  
Give us understanding that your body is incomplete if people are left behind  
Give us an appreciation of the role we must play in spreading your good news to all we meet

We praise you Lord for all of your good gifts  
We thank you for those pioneers who have worked tirelessly  
to carry out the bishops' prophetic vision of 1978

We give thanks for loving parents who welcome and nurture their children  
We appreciate all those living with disabilities who contribute their time and talents even in the face of obstacles or rejection

Guide us always Lord in your way  
Amen

## Prayer for Inclusion

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 People with Disabilities*

## **We are One Flock**

God bless those who open doors:

With faith,  
With love,  
With knowledge,  
Assuring  
All your people may  
Worship here. . .

God bless those who

Welcome all your people  
To the celebrations and  
Obligations  
Membership within your  
Church

God bless those who feel excluded.

Give them faith,  
Give them love  
Give them the knowledge  
Of your welcome

Open our hearts

To move swiftly  
Within your grace;  
To hear your message  
In silent words;  
To glimpse your glory  
beyond our sight;  
To find your wisdom  
in simple truths;  
To Accept our Weakness  
In Your Strength.

Let us join Christ

in breaking down those walls  
Which separate us, one from another.

## **Access Blessing**

(Editors note: This prayer specifically address the blessing of items used to facilitate access, such as elevators and ramps.)

WELCOME

OPENING PRAYER

Priest: Let us pray.

Living and true God, you created all that is good and holy. Be close to us, your servants, who gather here today. Be our constant help and protection. Enable us to reach out lovingly to all your children, to show understanding and awareness, comfort and consolation, justice and equality, so that together we may participate fully in parish life and worship.

We ask this through Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, One God, for ever and ever.

All: Amen.

## SCRIPTURE READING

Mark 2:1-12

When Jesus returned to Capernaum after some days, it became known that he was home. Many gathered together so that there was no longer room for them, not even around the door, and he preached the word to them. They came bringing to him a paralytic carried by four men. Unable to get near Jesus because of the crowd, they opened up the roof above him. After they had broken through, they let down the mat on which the paralytic was lying. When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, "Child, your sins are forgiven." Now some of the scribes were sitting there asking themselves, "Why does this man speak this way? He is blaspheming. Who but God alone can forgive sins?" Jesus immediately knew in his mind what they were thinking to themselves, so he said, "Why are you thinking such things in your hearts? Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, 'Rise, pick up your mat and walk'? But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority to forgive sins on earth"-he said to the paralytic, "I say to you, rise, pick up your mat, and go home." He rose, picked up his mat at once, and went away in the sight of everyone. They were all astounded and glorified God, saying, "We have never seen anything like this."

## SILENT REFLECTION

## BLESSING

Those who can may extend their hand as the priest recites the blessing.

Priest: Creator God, you give us all good things. You know our needs and fulfill our desires. You protect us when we are fragile and give us courage for each new day. You give us strength when we are weak and humility when we are boastful.

Bless this new [e.g., elevator, ramp, hearing enhancement system] and those who will use it. May it open up a world of possibilities. May it bring worshipers to our assembly, students to your saving Word, and seekers to the divine love that awaits them.

May we never take for granted any of our gifts, especially the gift of each other. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

All: Amen

Priest sprinkles the [elevator, ramp, hearing enhancement system, etc.] with holy water.

## INTERCESSIONS

Priest: Confident that we are all God's children let us approach him with our petitions.

Response: Lord, make us one.

Minister: For creativity and sensitivity in breaking down barriers in attitude and architecture, we pray.  
(Response)

That our parish community may continue Jesus' mission of love for people with disabilities, offering appropriate support and services, we pray. (Response)

That people with disabilities may respond with trust to parish efforts to involve them more fully in the life of the Church, we pray. (Response)

That we may be grateful for the gifts and abilities that all people can share with our church and our community, we pray. (Response)

That neighborhoods will open their hearts and help people with disabilities, especially those that hinder our growth in God's love, we pray. (Response)

God of love, our refuge and our strength, hear the prayers of your Church that we offer in faith. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

#### LORD'S PRAYER

Priest: Gathering our prayer and praise into one, let us offer the prayer that Christ himself taught us to pray...

All: Our Father...

#### SIGN OF PEACE

Priest: Let us offer one another a sign of Christ's peace.

*(This blessing, which was developed by Dr. Richard Strife of the Office of Worship in the Diocese of Lansing, was originally printed in Jubilee Days: The Jubilee Day for Persons with Disabilities [Washington, DC: National Catholic Partnership on Disability, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2000], 8.)*

## Merton Prayer

"My Lord God, I have no idea where I am going. I do not see the road ahead of me. I cannot know for certain where it will end. Nor do I really know myself, and the fact that I think I am following your will does not mean that I am actually doing so.

"But I believe that the desire to please you does in fact please you. And I hope I have that desire in all that I am doing. I hope that I will never do anything apart from that desire. And I know that if I do this you will lead me by the right road though I may know nothing about it.

"Therefore will I trust you always though I may seem to be lost and in the shadow of death. I will not fear, for you are ever with me, and you will never leave me to face my perils alone."

Thomas Merton