



NATIONAL CATHOLIC PARTNERSHIP ON DISABILITY

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Loyola Press 2016 “Opening Doors” Award Winner Announced

The National Catholic Partnership on Disability (NCPD), in partnership with Loyola Press, is pleased to announce St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Church from West Des Moines, Iowa 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 Dioceses of Toledo and Wichita, and the Archdiocese of Detroit, selected St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Church 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.

Judge Marsha Rivas, Coordinator of the Office for Persons with Disabilities in the Diocese of Toledo, noted that: “We judges were amazed with the way inclusionary practices pervade almost every nook and cranny of the parish! We loved the accessibility and hospitality built into every weekend Mass: adjustable ambo, assistive hearing devices, a sensory calming space, disability awareness pew cards and customized picture missals in every pew. We also appreciated the engagement of persons with varying disabilities and ages in active ministry roles. Having accessible and welcoming Lenten Fish Fries with gluten-free options and low-sensory seating really shows how the entire parish embraces their mission of welcoming and engaging all people.”

NCPD Board Chair, Sr. Kathleen Schipani, IHM, offered these congratulations to St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Church: “The parish staff and parishioners are a wonderful model of belonging and welcome for all people in their parish family. What I especially admire is their planning process which includes people with disabilities and their family members. St. Francis of Assisi Parish is truly a shining model of what parish ministry can be with persons with disabilities.”

The award will be presented to the pastor and parish community at the 9:30 am Mass on Sunday, December 11 by Dr. Nancy Thompson, NCPD Director of Diocesan Relations. “I am pleased to have this opportunity to publicly acknowledge the work and compassion of Fr. Ray McHenry and the staff and parishioners of St. Francis Parish. As the mother of a son with significant disabilities, I know how important it is to have a parish community in which you experience a true sense of belonging and welcome. Of equal value is having the opportunity to offer your gifts back to the parish, which is evident at St. Francis of Assisi.”

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By granting this award to St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Church, 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.