

Sr. Schipani praised the actions of the Bishops, “the revised **Guidelines** address a number of real-life pastorally-sensitive sacramental issues with deep theological insight and, like the Good Shepherd who knows and is attentive to the flock, seeks to bring all its members to the embrace of God’s love through the sacraments.” She also noted that NCPD will provide a link to the Guidelines on ncpd.org, as soon as the **Guidelines** are posted on the USCCB website.

Janice Benton, executive director of NCPD, reflecting on the **Guidelines**, noted the important input on the part of many dedicated advocates and pastoral leaders around the country that shaped what she sees as a “beautiful refection of the Church’s response to the sacramental life of persons with disabilities.” Further, she comments that “the **Guidelines** will have a profound and lasting impact on countless persons with disabilities in their participation in the sacraments and in their life of faith.”

Dr. Miguel J. Romero, Th.D., Th.M., faculty member in the Theology and Religious Studies Department of Salve Regina University and an NCPD Board member, in commenting on the revisions made by the Bishops, emphasized the foundational principle of the Guidelines: “Christian reflection on the ordinary vulnerabilities and diverse dependencies of our bodies begins with the inalienable dignity of every human being. We are formed in the image of God, and have an immortal spiritual essence—for that reason, regardless of our particular limitations, even in the most profound cases of physical or cognitive impairment, each of us is capable of receiving and responding to the reconciling grace of God.”

Dr. Romero, whose brother has a profound disability, in learning of the Bishops’ ratification of the **Guidelines**, noted, “Those of us whose lives are shaped by the rhythm and gait of disability sometimes experience, in ordinary parish life, forms of alienation and exclusion that reflects the brokenness of our wider culture. The Bishops have called the Church, once again, to remember that providing ready access to the sacraments and promoting full participation in the sacraments is integral to the way Catholics perform the unity and holiness of the Church held forth in the Nicene Creed.”

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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.