



## April: Autism Appreciation Month Bulletin Announcements and Prayers



### Bulletin Insert:

In April, we recognize the gifts of persons with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) and show how our faith leads us to create communities where all are welcome. "Respect for persons with disabilities and including them equally in the life of the Church is crucial for our understanding of the human person."

- Daniel Cardinal DiNardo, Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston and Former USCCB President.

### A Prayer That Can Accompany a Bulletin Insert:

God of Mercy, we ask that you strengthen our resolve and inspire us to create places of welcome for persons with Autism and their families.

Help us to be compassionate to parents whose child has just been diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder.

Help us to be advocates for and with children and adults who are seeking acceptance and access to education, work, services, and therapies.

Help us to be partners with caregivers and service providers to create a continuum of welcome and support for every person with Autism.

Help us to remember that every person is made in Your image and that every life is worth living. We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

(From the Diocese of Columbus)

## Prayers of the Faithful:

1. That we recognize the gifts of persons with Autism and how our faith leads us to create communities where all are welcome. We pray to the Lord: R/.
2. That growth in understanding of autism and other disabilities will lead to relationships of support and increase a sense of belonging for those who live with disabilities and their families. We pray to the Lord: R/.

## Fact Sheet Information:

While the definition of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) has changed over time, the current Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (DSM-V, 2013) defines ASD as involving both persistent deficits in social communication/interaction and restricted, repetitive patterns of behavior. Additionally, individuals with ASD may or may not have significant deficits in language, and may or may not have significant deficits in cognitive abilities. According to the CDC, 1 in 54 children are diagnosed with ASD in the United States (CDC, 2016). In 2017, ASD was deemed the fastest growing developmental disability in the United States (CDC, 2018).

As a “spectrum,” ASD characteristics vary considerably in severity and type. On one end of the spectrum, features of Autism Spectrum Disorder in a particular person are mild and sometimes not easily identifiable. These characteristics may include difficulties in picking up on social cues or difficulty making eye contact. On the other end of the spectrum, a person could have ASD characteristics which are considerably more profound and include significant cognitive, communication and functional impairments. It is believed that about one-third of individuals with ASD are non-verbal, and some have significantly challenging behaviors.

In order to ensure that all persons with ASD can meaningfully participate in the Church, individualized attention is key, as well as a diverse repertoire of resources and accommodations.



National Catholic Partnership on Disability

[www.ncpd.org](http://www.ncpd.org)