

Office for Catechesis and Evangelization



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Ministry for Persons with Special Needs (MPSN)

Purpose of the Office: The goal of catechesis is to lead others to union with Christ through initial evangelization and ongoing formation in faith, hope, and charity. The Office of Catechesis and Evangelization fosters the faith formation of adults so that they can fulfill their responsibility as confirmed Catholics to hand on the Faith. As authentic witnesses of Jesus Christ, those who teach the Faith need ongoing formation in fervent sacramental living, prayer and training in Methodology, Scripture, and Doctrine.

Work of the Office

- Oversees religion curriculum, religion textbooks, and diocesan-wide assessments.
- Provides training, formation and resources for adults with a special focus on catechetical leaders, catechists, and parents as primary educators of their children.
- Sponsors religious certification workshops, maintains a library of certification resources for free rental and monitors the certification status of directors and coordinators of Faith Formation, catechists, aides, Catholic school administrators and teachers, and parents.
- Oversees Hmong Ministry which provides assistance to Hmong Catholic families.
- Facilitates the Ministry for Persons with Special Needs.

“Modern man listens more willingly to witnesses than to teachers, and if he does listen to teachers, it is because they are witnesses.”

-Evangelization in the Modern World, Apostolic Exhortation, Pope Paul VI, n. 41

Diocesan Religion Curriculum



What is the Purpose of the Religion Curriculum?

The Religion Curriculum provides the overall foundation for the content of catechesis for each grade level. The purpose of the Religion Curriculum is to lead students to draw closer to Christ through learning about who He is and what He wants. Faith formation develops greater *understanding* of Jesus Christ. In *responding* to Christ through greater understanding, the student is *changed* through cooperation with His grace. (cf. *On Catechesis in our Time*, n. 5, 20).

What are the Components?

The opening section of the Curriculum contains an Overview which is a brief summary of the Christian life. The Overview is followed by the Scope of the Curriculum, which provides the building blocks for twelve doctrines as they are developed for each grade level. This allows the teacher to build upon what was taught the previous year. Moreover, there is an outline for the Story of the Bible.

The Curriculum for each grade level consists of four pillars: Creed, Sacraments, Life in Christ, Prayer. In addition, there is a brief section on the saints, a list of vocabulary words and suggested resources for students, teachers, and parents.

The Ninth through Twelfth Grade Curriculum contains nine Areas of Competence that includes an overview of the essentials and suggested textbooks and Spiritual reading.

For Whom is the Curriculum Intended?

The Diocesan Religion Curriculum is developed for pre-School through Twelfth Grade. It is meant to be used by Catholic School teachers, catechists, and parents in conjunction with an approved religion textbook and is available on the Diocesan website at www.dioceseoflacrosse.com. Click on Office and Ministries, followed by Catechesis.

“With regard to...catechesis,...the first point concerns the integrity of content. The person who becomes a disciple of Christ has the right to receive ‘the word of faith’ not in mutilated, falsified or diminished form but whole and entire, in all its rigor and vigor.”

On Catechesis in Our Time, Pope John Paul II, n. 30

Parent Version of the Diocesan Religion Curriculum



A family praying the Rosary

What is the Purpose of the Parent Version of the Religion Curriculum?

The purpose of the Parent Version of the Religion Curriculum is to assist parents in their ongoing responsibility of being the primary educators of their children in handing on the Faith and teaching them how to pray. Coming to know and love God through learning the Faith and speaking with Jesus Christ in daily prayer leads to a life of harmony, joy and inner peace. The goal of living the Catholic Faith as a family is to one day be united with our Father in Heaven.

What are the Components?

Each grade contains a Profile of the Characteristics, Faith Development Needs and Implications of the child at that level. A section on Parental Support is provided to assist parents in raising their children to be healthy, respectful, joyful and holy.

The Curriculum provides a condensed version of the means to know, love, and serve Jesus Christ through age-appropriate teachings on the Creed, the Sacraments, the Commandments and Beatitudes and Christian Prayer.

For Whom is the Parent Version of the Religion Curriculum Intended?

The Diocesan Religion Curriculum is developed for pre-School through Twelfth Grade. The Parent Version is meant to be used by parents in the home and is available on the Diocesan website at www.dioceseoflacrosse.com. Click on Office and Ministries in the upper right-hand corner, followed by Catechesis. The link can be found on the left-hand column.

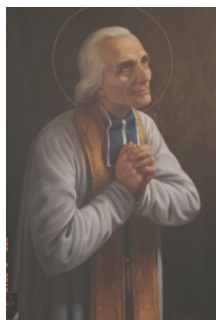
“Parents have the first responsibility for the education of their children.

Education in the faith by the parents should begin in the child’s earliest years.

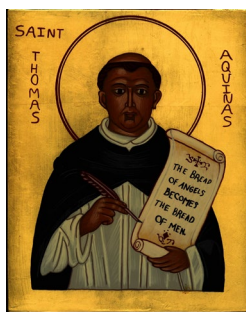
This already happens when family members help one another to grow in faith by the witness of a Christian life in keeping with the Gospel. Family catechesis precedes, accompanies, and enriches other forms of instruction in the faith. Parents have the mission of teaching their children to pray and to discover their vocation as children of God.”

-Catechism of the Catholic Church, paragraphs 2223, 2226

Understanding and Living the Virtues



St. John Vianney
Photo: Mundelein Seminary



St. Thomas Aquinas
Icon: Institute of St. Joseph



St. Thérèse of Lisieux
Photo taken in Lisieux, France

What is the Purpose of the Diocesan Virtue Program?

The Program entitled “Understanding and Living the Virtues” is to assist catechists and parents in teaching and guiding children and young people in the formation of virtue. Living the virtues is about pursuing the good and choosing it in concrete actions. We want to pursue the good in the practice of virtue as a response to God’s love for us. A joyful life is derived from living the virtues because the repetition of good habits strengthens our character as well as our relationship with Jesus Christ, family, friends, and all those we are called to serve.

What are the Components?

Part I of the Virtue Program consists of the Theological Virtues of faith, hope, and charity as well as the Cardinal Virtues of prudence, justice, fortitude, and temperance.

The Teacher Pages include a definition of the virtue and why we need it. Further, the life of one saint is described, showing how he/she lived the particular virtue in an explicit way. There are activities that foster the practice of the virtue as well as resources listed for each grade level.

The Parent Pages include a definition of the virtue and why we need it as well as suggestions for fostering the growth of the specific virtue at home. A brief reference is made to the saint who lived this virtue in a heroic manner along with a prayer for the saint’s intercession.

For Whom is the Virtue Program Intended?

The Virtue Program is for students in pre-school through twelfth grade and their parents as well as any adult. It is to be used in Catholic Schools, Parish Faith Formation Programs and homes. The Virtue Program is available on the Diocesan website at www.dioceseoflacrosse.com. Click on Offices and Ministries in the upper right-hand corner, followed by Catechesis.

“When we speak of virtues...we should always have before our eyes real men, concrete individuals. Virtue is not abstract, disconnected from ordinary life. On the contrary, it is deeply rooted in life; it springs from life and forms it. Virtue affects man’s life, actions, and behavior. One can deduce that in all these reflections, we are speaking not so much about virtue as about an individual who lives and acts ‘virtuously’:
we are referring to a person who is prudent, just and brave”
-Pope John Paul II, Allocution, November 22, 1978

Basic and Advanced Certification



What is the Purpose of the Certification Program?

Growing in the Catholic Faith through study and prayer is a life-long process. It is essential, above all, for any adult who teaches the Catholic Faith to receive ongoing formation in order to properly hand on the Faith to the next generation. This is true because “the quality of any form of pastoral activity is placed at risk if it does not rely on truly competent and trained personnel” (*General Directory for Catechesis*, n. 234). Only an authentic witness, who is growing in knowledge and love for Christ through a fervent sacramental life, spiritual reading and daily prayer is able to lead others to Him.

What are the Components?

Basic Certification consists of receiving 30 hours of faith formation in Doctrine, Scripture, Christian Spirituality and Methodology. Advanced Certification consists of receiving 60 hours in Doctrine, Scripture, Christian Spirituality and Methodology.

In order to obtain Basic or Advanced Certification or Renewal, all DREs, CREs, and Youth Ministers are to obtain 12 hours of certification credit per year. Catechists are to receive 6 hours of certification credit per year. Note: The time that is spent preparing to teach second grade or sixth grade, for example, while necessary and helpful for personal growth, is not considered part of Certification hours. The faith formation for certification is to be at an adult level.

When is this Training and Formation Held?

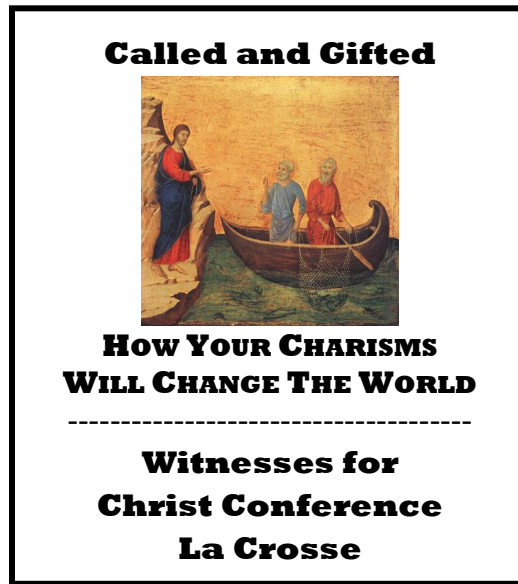
The preferred means of formation is through *Franciscan at Home* online workshops because the format is geared toward handing on the Faith, with the spiritual life of the learner at the heart of every workshop. Lay Formation and other Diocesan Programs are excellent means to obtain certification. A priest from the Diocese or an approved speaker with a degree in Catechetics, Theology, Christian Ministry or related field may present teachings for certification credit. Speakers from outside the Diocese must be approved by the Chancery using the proper forms. Presentations are to be based upon the *Catechism*, Sacred Scripture and Magisterial Documents. Approved resources are available for free rental from the Curriculum Library. Documentation of credits hours are to be kept in a Certification Folder.

Who May Attend?

Any confirmed adult is most welcome to receive formation and training in handing on the Faith.

“Diocesan pastoral programs must give absolute priority to the formation of lay catechists.”
Therefore, it is necessary to plan for, organize, and participate in formation that assists a teacher, catechist, and parent “to mature as a person, a believer, and as an apostle.”
-*General Directory for Catechesis*, Congregation for the Clergy, 234, 238

Catechetical Conference



What is the Purpose of the Annual Catechetical Conference?

The Conference provides ongoing formation for Catechetical Leaders and catechists, strengthening their own faith, and their ability to hand on the Faith to others. The focus is on Doctrine, Scripture, Methodology and Christian Spirituality based upon the 'New Evangelization'. In turn, Catechetical Leaders are better equipped to assist parish catechists to teach the Faith and to lead students intentionally to union with Christ.

What are the Components of the Catechetical Conference?

The Conference is a two-day event. The various components consist of personal faith formation and prayer for the catechetical leader and catechist as well as information on new initiatives and resources, deanery networking sessions as well as materials to further develop the parish program. A representative from each parish is required to attend the Friday afternoon session. The afternoon sessions include a teaching by the Bishop or a keynote speaker and workshops.

When is the Catechetical Conference?

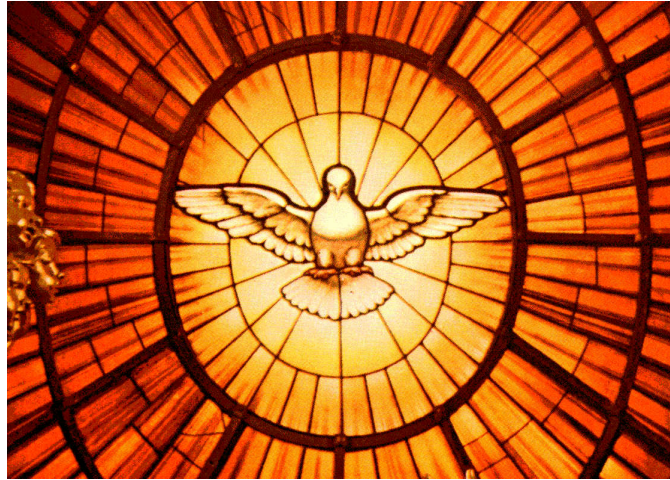
The Conference is held during the latter part of the summer.

Who May Attend?

Any confirmed adult may attend the Conference.

"The diocesan catechetical program is the global catechetical project of a particular Church, which integrates, in a structured and coherent way, the diverse catechetical programs addressed by the Diocese to different age groups... Among the diverse forms of catechesis 'their perfect complementarity must be fostered.' The *organizing principle*, which gives coherence to the various catechetical programs offered by a particular Church, is attention to adult catechesis. This is the axis around which revolves the catechesis of childhood and adolescence as well as that of old age."
-General Directory for Catechesis, Congregation for the Clergy, n. 274, 275

Training for new Catechetical Leaders



Symbol of the Holy Spirit, Window in St. Peter's Basilica, Rome

What is the Purpose of the Training / Formation for new Catechetical Leaders?

The purpose of the one-day workshop is to strengthen Catechetical Leaders in following the guidance of the Holy Spirit in the work of catechesis. Moreover, training on the necessary tools of catechesis will empower the catechetical leader to form adults in the parish to hand on the Faith in a manner that will lead to union with Christ.

What are the Components?

This training includes formation in Methodology with an explanation of the materials and resources promoted by the Office of Catechesis and Evangelization. These resources include the Religion Curriculum, the Parent Version of the Religion Curriculum, the Virtue Program, the Certification Program, guidelines on the preparation for Sacraments, Diocesan Baptismal and Confirmation Programs, Safe Environment Training, as well as interactive discussion on organizing, developing, and coordinating the Faith Formation Program in the parish. Other topics such as guidelines for assisting/pastoring people in the parish are discussed.

When is this Training and Formation Held?

This training and formation is held in fall at the Holy Cross Diocesan Center.

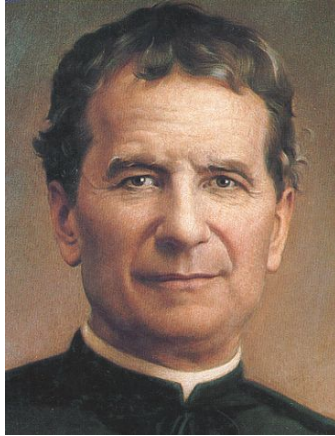
Who May Attend?

Any new or relatively new Catechetical Leader as well as any interested adult may attend.

“Catechesis, which is growth in faith and the maturing of Christian life towards its fullness, is consequently a work of the Holy Spirit, a work that He alone can initiate and sustain in the Church... When carrying out her mission of giving catechesis, the Church – and also every individual Christian devoting himself to that mission within the Church and in Her name – must be very much aware of acting as a pliant instrument of the Holy Spirit. To invoke this Spirit constantly, to be in communion with Him, to endeavor to know His authentic inspirations must be the attitude of the teaching Church and of every catechist.”

-On Catechesis in Our Time, Apostolic Exhortation, Pope John Paul II, n. 72

Catechist Training in Methodology



St. John Bosco, Catechist Saint and Patron of Youth

What is the Purpose of Catechist Training?

It is essential for any adult who teaches the Catholic Faith to receive ongoing formation in order to properly hand on the Faith to the next generation. The Office of Catechesis and Evangelization offers a variety of presentations that provide formation in Methodology. These offerings have the ultimate goal of training catechists to teach the Faith in a manner which leads children, young people and their parents to union with Christ.

What are the Components?

Presentations include:

- Jesus: The Heart of all Catholic Teaching
- Praying with Scripture
- Sacred Scripture: The Big Picture
- Lesson Planning: Teaching for understanding and conversion (a change of heart)
- Fostering Holiness in Children
- Shifting to Family-Centered Formation
- Jesus Christ: His Person and Works

When is this Training and Formation Held? These sessions are held by request and on location in the parish or deanery.

Who May Attend?

All of the Catholic faithful interested in learning more about handing on the Faith should attend.

“The definitive aim of catechesis is to put people not only in touch but in communion, in intimacy with Jesus Christ... The person who becomes a disciple of Christ has the right to receive ‘the word of faith’ not in mutilated, falsified or diminished form but whole and entire, in all its rigor and vigor..

The method and language used must truly be means for communicating the whole and not just a part of ‘the words of eternal life’ and ‘the ways of life’.”

-On Catechesis in our Time, Apostolic Exhortation, Pope John Paul II, n. 5, 30

Diocesan Confirmation Program



Descent of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost

What is the Purpose of the Confirmation Program?

In the Sacrament of Confirmation, the Holy Spirit *strengthens* the Theological Virtues of faith, hope, and charity and the Gifts of the Holy Spirit so that we can be faithful witnesses of Jesus Christ by living our faith “out loud”. The Confirmation Program helps young people to develop a deeper relationship with the Holy Spirit and to prepare them for the necessary openness that they need to be receptive to His interior movements and promptings.

What are the Components?

The Diocesan Confirmation Program provides 40 plus teachings of which the choice and organization of the sessions are based upon paragraph #1697 in the *Catechism*. This paragraph lists what should be taught a Christian wanting to live according to the inner promptings of the Holy Spirit. As teens need to reason through the fundamental questions about life for the first time, the “basics” of the faith are presented to them in ever-deeper and creative ways.

Components of the Program include a Retreat, interactive presentations on the Blessed Trinity, Creation and the Original Sin, an 8-week Bible Study which presents an overview of the Bible from Adam to Jesus, and teachings on the Holy Spirit. Further, there is an individual teaching on each of the Theological Virtues of faith, hope, and charity as well as the seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit as these Virtues and Gifts along with a relationship with the Holy Spirit are at the heart of this Sacrament. Developing a daily habit of prayer forms the foundation of the program.

For Whom is the Confirmation Program Intended?

The Diocesan Confirmation Program is for use in the parish. The Program can be used in various ways as best fits the particular plan of the parish. Please consult the Diocesan guidelines.

The great gift of the Sacrament of Confirmation is that it *strengthens* the person as a disciple to give witness rather than simply expressing the person’s determination as a disciple to give witness. The Sacraments are not about what we have accomplished or desire to do for God. The Sacraments are God’s free gift of grace to us. As the same time, these gifts of God’s love involve an obligation as a disciple to bear witness to God’s love in word and deed by choosing to cooperate with the grace given.

-cf. *Origins*, Bishop Alvaro Corrada, CNS Documentary Service, Nov. 10 2005

Preparation for Infant Baptism



What is the Purpose of the Baptismal Preparation Program?

In the Sacrament of Baptism, a person becomes a child of God and a temple of the Holy Spirit. The purpose of the Preparation Program for Infant Baptism is to help the parents and godparents to understand the meaning of the gestures and words as well as the grace actually received by the newly baptized baby. The mother and father hear of their responsibility to teach their child to know and love Jesus Christ through handing on the Faith, through prayer and through Christian living in the context of the family.

What are the Components?

The Preparation for Infant Baptism consists of catechesis on the Rite of Baptism as well as Parenting Skills. There are two sessions, containing the following content:

- 1) God's Gift of a Child to You / God's Love for You / Becoming a Child of God / Prayer: Relationship with God
- 2) Receiving the Gift of a Child / Loving Your Child as God Does / Recognizing Your Child as a Gift from God / Sharing God's Blessings with Your Child

For Whom is the Baptismal Preparation Program Intended?

The Preparation for Infant Baptism is a program for use in the parish. It is intended for parents who desire to have their baby baptized. The baby's godparents are also to be part of this preparation. Note: The Baptismal Preparation Program is currently being piloted in several parishes. It will be ready for use throughout the Diocese in January 2011.

"Baptism is God's most beautiful and magnificent gift...We call it gift, grace, anointing, enlightenment, garment of immortality, bath of rebirth, seal, and most precious gift. It is called *gift* because it is conferred on those who bring nothing of their own; *grace* since it is given even to the guilty; *Baptism* because sin is buried in the water; *anointing* for it is priestly and royal as are those who are anointed; *enlightenment* because it radiates light; *clothing* since it veils our shame; *bath* because it washes; and *seal* as it is our guard and the sign of God's Lordship."

-St. Gregory of Nanzianzus, as quoted in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, n. 1216

Hmong Ministry



What is the Purpose of the Hmong Ministry?

The goal of catechesis is to lead others to union with Christ through initial evangelization and ongoing formation in a life of faith, hope, and charity. The purpose of the Hmong Ministry is to welcome the Hmong people to be part of the Catholic Church and to affirm and build up the Faith of Hmong Catholics.

What are the Components?

Hmong children are invited to attend the local Catholic School or the Faith Formation Program with tuition assistance offered for those families needing support. Special classes are organized to prepare older children to receive the Sacraments.

Adults are invited to participate in the RCIA process in order to learn the Faith, develop a prayer and sacramental life and to enter the Church. Baptismal preparation classes are offered for parents wishing to have their children baptized. Evangelization sessions are scheduled from October through May, one Sunday a month and all are welcome to participate.

Where are the Centers for Hmong Ministry?

Hmong Ministry is part of the Office of Catechesis and Evangelization. A Hmong Catechist is located at St. Anne's Parish in Wausau who serves a large, active, Hmong Catholic Community.

Who may seek assistance from the Hmong Catechist(s)?

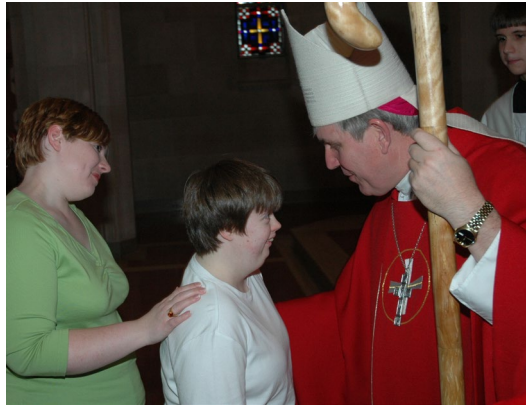
Anyone seeking to join the Hmong Catholic Community, wishing to enter the Church, prepare to receive Sacraments or desiring to grow in faith and prayer may contact the Hmong Catechist at St. Anne's at 715-849-3930 or the Office of Catechesis and Evangelization at 608-791-2658).

Prayer to the Seven Blessed Martyrs of Thailand who died for the Faith in 1940:

"Hear, O Merciful Lord, the prayers which we humbly offer to You, made worthy by the intercession of Your faithful Seven Martyrs of Thailand, whose witness in sacrificing their lives to profess their faith was as pleasing to You as is their prayer now in Heaven. We most sincerely recognize our weaknesses and sins, but we trust in the loving aid of our Beloved Seven Martyrs whom You, our Good Lord, wished to raise up in our midst as a most outstanding sign of Your Almighty Power to make the weak and humble strong... We earnestly desire to possess, O Beloved Martyrs, your strong faith, your great love for your Church and your firm resolution to live or die for the greater glory of God. With these we can be more grateful to God and more worthy to be heard. However, we find ourselves both poor and weak but we finally trust in the mercy of God through your powerful intercession. Amen.

-Shrine of Our Lady of the Martyrs of Thailand

Ministry with Persons with Special Needs



Sacrament of Confirmation, La Crosse Deanery Special Rel. Ed. Program

What is the Purpose of the Ministry with Persons with Special Needs?

The purpose of the Ministry with Persons with Special Needs (MPSN) is to proclaim and establish the Kingdom of God among all people so they may live out their baptismal call with dignity, no matter their disabilities. This ministry is in imitation of Jesus who healed, forgave, and commissioned others, thereby including all people who wished to follow Him.

What are the Components?

The MPSN Committee is composed of the Directors of the Curia Pastoral Offices and the MPSN Consultant, Diane Hietpas, an employee of McDonell Area Catholic Schools. The MPSN Committee provides assistance to parishes and Catholic schools in serving children, young people and adults with special needs in the areas listed below.

Parish sacramental celebrations should be accessible to persons with special needs and open to their full, active, and conscious participation, according to their capacity. Special effort should be made to welcome those parishioners with special needs who live in institutions or group homes and are unable to frequent their parish Churches or participate in parish activities. In accord with Canon 777, n. 4, pastors are responsible to be as inclusive as possible in providing evangelization, catechetical formation, and sacramental preparation for parishioners with special needs. (*Guidelines for the Celebration of the Sacraments with Persons with Disabilities*, National Conference of Catholic Bishops, 1998)

When does the MPSN Committee Meet?

The MPSN Committee meets six times a year at the Holy Cross Diocesan Center.

Who may Seek Assistance from the MPSN Consultant?

Anyone from a parish or Catholic school, including a pastor, administrator, parent etc., may contact the Director of the Office of Catechesis and Evangelization at 608-791-2658 to receive guidance and/or recommended resources from the MPSN consultant.

“We proclaim that if any disabled person is prevented from active participation, the Church community is incomplete. We call upon Church leadership throughout the country to encourage conversion of mind and heart, so that all persons with disabilities may be invited to worship and to every level of service as full members of the Body of Christ.”
-*Celebrate and Challenge*, United States Catholic Bishops, November 1989