



Vision

The National Catholic Office for the Deaf

Fall 2010

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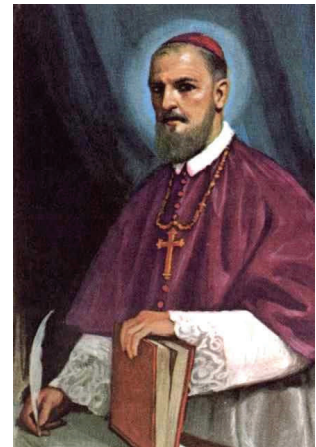
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Join NCOD

Deaf Catholicism in the United States And the Birth of NCOD

A history prepared by Fr. Paul Zirimenya

Deaf Catholicism in the United States and Canada like American Catholicism has its roots in Europe. The purpose of this article is to explain the beginnings of Deaf Catholicism in the United States, to examine the influence of the Catholic Church in lives of Deaf people and their culture, and why until about 1949, Deaf participation in the Catholic Church was almost unheard of in the United States.



The relationship between the Catholic Church in Europe and Deaf people revolved around their education and instruction in religion. Juan Pablo Bonet, a Spanish priest made use of a manual alphabet and invented a system of visible signs in communicating with Deaf people. St. Francis De Sales in one of his missionary journeys in Europe, met Martin, a deaf man who worked for him as gardener while he was bishop of Geneva. He communicated with him in sign language and instructed him to prepare for his First Penance and Holy Communion. Lana Terzi, a Jesuit naturalist and physician, used objects and lipreading with the deaf for them to understand

Continued on page 5—Deaf Catholicism

A Pastoral Service for Persons who are Deaf or
Hard of Hearing

Greetings members and friends,

Can you believe it? Four decades of Catholic Deaf Ministry. The National Catholic Office for the Deaf will be 40 years old in 2011. We will celebrate our anniversary at the 2011 Pastoral Week conference. Be sure to frequent our website at www.ncod.org for all the details. But before you join us in January, travel back in time to the beginning of Catholic Deaf Ministry in the United States. We have a wealth of information compiled by Fr. Paul Zirimenya throughout this issue of the Vision.

And it will be hard to find a 2011 David Walsh Pastoral Worker of the Year recipient as worthy as our 2010 recipient, Sr. Olivine Fiola! Refresh your memory on her accomplishments on page 6.

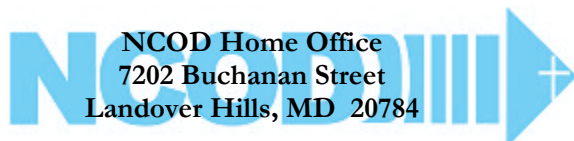
This year has been the year of the Priest and we showcase the activities of two wonderful priests, Fr. Brian O'Neill and Fr. Tony Russo.

We hope you enjoy this historic edition of the Vision and that you will join us in Atlanta, January 14-18, 2011 for the 2011 NCOD Pastoral Week Conference.

*Happy Reading,
NCOD Board of Directors*

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In the Year of the Priest...Fr. Brian O'Neill

By Kate Slosar and South Jersey Deaf Community

In the Year of the Priest, it is a great blessing that the Deaf Community across the United States and Canada can go to the Eucharist celebrated in American Sign Language. Some priests have taken the time to learn American Sign Language and can communicate with Deaf persons and celebrate mass in American Sign Language.

In our Catholic Tradition, we believe that the Mass is the most important part of our Catholic Faith as we say thank you to God and celebrate our lives with Jesus in the Eucharist. One priest in Camden, New Jersey has done just that. His name is Father Brian O'Neill. This past July, Fr. Brian celebrated his retirement from the Diocese of Camden (from serving hearing parishes of the church). Fr. Brian will continue to minister with the deaf. For 38 years, Fr. Brian has ministered with the Deaf, and this is his story:

"I started at Sacred Heart in Camden in 1971 and during that time, there were riots in the city of Camden. People stopped coming into the city. So I went out looking for people

to come to church. In July 1972, I met two boys on Chelton Terrace project area and the two boys were teasing each other and got into a fight. I noticed their argument so I walked over to quiet things down and find out what was wrong. The one boy was spoken to and then I turned to the second boy. The second boy did not seem to care what I was saying. I repeated three times, I realized this young boy was deaf. He was 9 ½ years old. I asked myself "who is taking care of the spiritual needs of the Deaf people?" This was my call from God that I begin a ministry with the Deaf"

Fr. Brian started to find ways to communicate with the Deaf. He believed that the Mass should be celebrated in ASL and that Deaf should have the opportunity to understand God's Word and

participate fully in the Sacraments. Fr. Brian met Fr. Anthony Russo, from Philadelphia, and Fr. Russo taught Fr. Brian the signs for Mass. Fr. Brian began to reach out to Deaf people in South Jersey. His Bishop, George Guifoyle gave him permission to work with the Deaf, but he also said "you still will work full time in the parish".

In the beginning, Fr. Brian had Masses in different parts of the Diocese late Sunday afternoons. Deaf people wanted masses on Sunday mornings instead of late Sunday afternoon. Fr. Brian looked for churches that would allow him to celebrate Mass on Sunday mornings. In 1980, St. Rose of Lima in Haddon Heights had a chapel and allowed Fr. Brian to celebrate mass there. Monsignor Callahan was the generous priest at St. Rose of Lima who welcomed Fr. Brian and the Deaf Community. In 2000, Deaf Ministry was welcomed by Transfiguration Church in West Collingswood and later to St. Gregory's in Magnolia. Fr. Brian did not do this alone, he had support from Joann Burns as his pastoral assistant. They searched for Deaf people to be welcomed into the church. Fr. Brian and Joann continued to travel to different churches and celebrate masses. In 2002-2003, Sister Bonnie McMenamin, SSJ was hired, and Deaf ministry had a home in St. Gregory's.

Through the years, many Deaf people became a part of Deaf Ministry and would follow Fr. Brian and became involved in various spiritual and social events. Here are several stories from our Deaf people in South New Jersey:

From **Linda Telese**, a Deaf parent, has a Deaf family :

When we met Father Brian at MKSD for CCD class for my son Tony and he was about 4 or 5 yrs old. Father Brain asked me to teach CCD at Lower school and I said "yes." I taught the kids CCD class for 11 yrs. He helped my son receive his confirmation and plan his recent wedding.

Continued on page 4—O'Neill

Continued from page 3—O'Neill

Father Brian always teases my son Tony when they shake their hands. We thank him for being a part of all our lives. He is a good, kind man. We thank God for Fr. Brian. And wish him good luck in his retirement.

* MKSD – is deaf school in Trenton, NJ*

From **Rosanne Cain**, an active member of our Deaf Community,

My parents and I moved to Bellmawr, NJ from Philadelphia, PA in November, 1976. One Sunday in January or February 1977 at Mary, Mother of the Church, my parents and I met Deacon Henry Custodio. My parents told Deacon Custodio that I am deaf and can read lips and know sign language. Deacon Custodio told my parents that he worked with the “hearing” Catholic priest named Father Brian O'Neill and he celebrates sign language Masses for the Deaf on two Sundays every month at St. Gregory's Church in Magnola, NJ. Soon, Deacon Custodio took me to St. Gregory's Church and introduced me to Fr. Brian. I was surprised and pleased that there was a Catholic priest who knows some Sign Language and signs the Deaf mass. He cares a lot for Deaf people. Fr. Brian's Ministry for Deaf people saved my life.

Fr. Brian celebrated and signed many Baptisms for Deaf Babies of hearing parents and hearing babies of Deaf parents. Fr. Brian also signed Weddings for Deaf couples and anointed the deaf who were sick. Fr. Brian signed my father's funeral in 1988 and my mother's funeral in 2004 for which my family and I are very grateful. We, the Deaf community thank Fr. Brian for saying “yes” to God to serve the Deaf Catholics and the Deaf Community.

From **Tom Stankard**, an active member of our Deaf Community

I met Fr. Brian O'Neill at a heath club in Westville Grove. Fr. Brian was playing handball and when he came to me, He introduced himself and said we have signed Mass.

I didn't go. I always go to Mass with my mom and sister near my home. It was boring. I did not understand, it showed same things over and over again. In 1981, I heard about Fr. Brian and his sign language masses. My mom encouraged me to go. I didn't want to go. My sister took me to Fr. Brian and we met again. I met Joann Burns too. We met at St. Rose of Lima Parish.

I became friends with Fr. Brian. I became a core team member. Fr. Brian taught me how to serve as altar server. Fr. Brian was at St. Rose of Lima from November 1981 to July 2001. I continued to serve Mass. Fr. Brian moved again to Transfiguration Parish from July 22, 2001 to July 15, 2001 and moved again to St. Gregory's Parish where Fr. Brian was named Pastor at St. Gregory's. Now I teach young kids how to be altar servers.

Fr. Brian got a call to serve soldiers in Richmond, VA from May 28, 2008 to July, 2009. I missed Fr. Brian. I was happy Fr. Brian came back in July, 2009 as a senior priest. I would have tea with Fr. Brian and give him rides to the airport. Fr. Brian is good man.

When Fr. Brian said “yes” to God about serving the needs of the Deaf Community in South Jersey, he was an answer to prayer for many Catholics and non-Catholics who were eager to learn about God, his Son Jesus and the Holy Spirit. Deaf people were amazed that a priest could sign well enough to share with them the Good News about God's love and compassion. Fr. Brian believed that everyone is welcome at Mass. He provided various ways to welcome and include Deaf members of the Church and their families. Whenever Fr. Brian was celebrating Mass or the Sacraments for the Deaf Community, he was making sure that the Deaf realized that they were friends with God. We thank you God, for our friend, Fr. Brian, and his call to serve the needs of the Deaf in South Jersey.

Congratulations on your Retirement, Fr. Brian.

their environment. Lorenza, a Spanish philologist and missionary in America, took an active interest in educating the deaf in Rome and he published a learned work consisting of five parts ranging from political, metaphysical, philosophical and theological aspects of a deaf person's life.



Abbe Charles – Michel de l'Epee, was a Catholic priest and Father of *Langue de Signes Francaise* (LSF) or French Sign Language and founder of the first School for the Deaf in Paris in 1760. On one of his missionary journeys, he met two deaf children that excited and awakened in him the zeal for

their religious instruction. He noticed even before having received instruction from anyone, the deaf children communicated in sign language and he concluded that sign language was the best means of communication and of great service in the education of the Deaf. The School in Paris won international fame due to its approach in using sign language in educating deaf children (Today, many Deaf people from the United States are proud of Abbe Charles – Michel de l'Epee, and when they visit France on vacation, the School for the Deaf in Paris is a must visit). However the Milan International Congress in 1880 and with Abbe' Sicard a disciple of Abbe' Charles- Michel de l'Epee, as president, overwhelmingly approved the oral method in education of the deaf and this was a setback in the use of sign language.

The first American to visit the School for the Deaf in Paris was Rev. Dr. Thomas Gallaudet, a Protestant priest who happened to meet Abbe' Sicard while visiting London, who then invited him to the School for the Deaf in Paris. At the end of his visit, he was assigned Laurent Clerc, one of the distinguished and brilliant pupils and valuable associates of Abbe' Sicard to accompany him on his return to America. In the contract drawn up between Abbe' Sicard and Laurent Clerc, it was stipulated that Laurent Clerc was not to be called upon teaching anything contrary to the



Roman Catholic religion, and in his letter to Bishop John Cheverus of Boston, Abbe's Sicard wrote that:

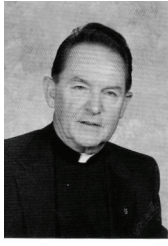
Extreme desire to procure of the unfortunate deaf of the country in which you dwell, and fulfill so well the mission of the Holy Apostles, the happiness of knowing our holy religion, leads me to a sacrifice, which exceeds human strength. I send to the United States the best taught of my pupils, Laurent Clerc, whom my art has restored to society and religion. Laurent Clerc goes fully resolved to live and be faithful to the principles of the Catholic religion, which I have taught him.

Notwithstanding the kind of solitude of his kind beloved master, Rev. Dr. Gallaudet, Clerc, as many deaf deprived of constant religious instruction, in his surroundings weakened in the faith and apostatized. Clerc converted to Protestant faith mainly due to his association with Rev. Dr. Gallaudet.

He helped Rev. Dr. Gallaudet found the American School for the Deaf in Hartford, Connecticut in 1817. Clerc taught French Sign Language, adapted to English to the early hearing teachers employed by the American School for the Deaf who were in constant contact with the pupils. Soon Clerc was giving private lessons in LSF to nearly a dozen hearing teachers from many eastern cities. All had journeyed to the school to learn Clerc's sign language and methods. Those teachers went back to several states to found schools in turn. American Sign Language (ASL) was later to be "born" out of French Sign Language and indigenous American home signs.



Meanwhile, by 1840, the Catholic Church was already involved in organizing education of the deaf. Actually, the oldest organization, The Convention of American Instructors of the Deaf, met for the first time in 1850 and for the sixteenth time in 1901, at the Le Couteulx, St. Mary's Institution for the Improved Instruction of Deaf and Dumb (the term dumb was used to refer to someone who cannot speak but currently it is no longer used because Deaf people have demonstrated that Sign Language is their natural means of communication and is now considered deeply offensive.) in Buffalo, New York, as the guests of the Sisters of St. Joseph. At the invitation of the Right Rev. D.J. O'Connell, Rector of The Catholic University of America, all persons interested in education of the deaf met in July 1907,



Rev. David Walsh C.S.S.R.

2010 Father David Walsh Pastoral Worker of the Year Award

Sister Olivine Fiola, M.O.

Sister Olivine Fiola, M.O., has been the chief organizer and guiding spirit of the ministry at Manitoba Catholic Church for over 43 years. Sister Fiola began teaching religious education at the Manitoba School for the Deaf in 1966. She also joined the Winnipeg Community Centre for the Deaf at that time. Sister Fiola spent much of her time traveling around Winnipeg visiting Deaf families learning about the needs of the Deaf Community, Catholic or not.



development of services for the hearing impaired.’ In 1994 Sister Fiola received the Reverend John Gallagher Award for “Outstanding Pastoral Worker.” And in 2008, she received the Reseau Award from the French organization honoring women for their contribution to the community.

Sister Fiola has been instrumental in establishing Marriage Encounter Weekends for deaf couples, “Teens Encounter Christ” weekend retreats for deaf teens, and Deaf Cursillo in Winnipeg.

In 1967, Sister Fiola began the work to establish a building for the Deaf Centre of Manitoba by acquiring financial support through local and federal government. The Centre officially opened in 1975.

Sister Fiola’s presence at every Sunday Mass gives the community the feeling of security and reminds us that we are blessed having a person like her who really cares and is so dedicated in words and in deeds to the Catholic Deaf Ministry. Without Sister Olivine Fiola, there would be no Deaf Centre Manitoba in Winnipeg. We call the Centre “her baby.”

The Canadian Association of the Deaf presented Sister Fiola with the ‘Person of the Year Award’ in 1976 for “outstanding contribution to the

In the Year of the Priest...Fr. Anthony Russo, CSsR

On August 2, 2010, Father Anthony Russo celebrated his 50th Anniversary of his Profession of Vows as a member of the Congregation of the Redemptorist. Of these 50 years Father Russo has spent 43 of these years serving the Deaf Catholic Community in the Archdiocese of Philadelphia and the surrounding regional area. Father Russo came to Philadelphia in February of 1967. Following in the footsteps of Fr. Stephen Lanherr, C.Ss.R. who served in Philadelphia from 1941 up until his death in 1967, Fr. Anthony Russo came to Philadelphia eager to meet a very active group of Catholic Deaf people in the area.

Over more than four decades, Fr. Russo devoted himself to bringing the love of Jesus, through the Sacraments, catechesis and pastoral care to hundreds of Deaf adults and children he has come to know and love. Over these years you could find Fr. Russo signing the Mass on Sunday in Philadelphia or one of the county sites, meeting, teaching and praying with individuals and groups, teaching religion classes to children at PSD or Ryan School, preparing couples for marriage or the baptism of their children and providing pastoral support at times of sickness, crises or death. Fr. Russo served as the spiritual advisor to the ICDA, Chapter #8 and served on many boards and task forces related to services to the Deaf in the Philadelphia area. He was present at many of



the first meetings and conferences of the National Catholic Office of the Deaf. During these very full years of ministry, Fr. Russo also authored three books: *The God of the Deaf Adolescent*, 1974, *Made By Hand*, 1980 and more recently the book entitled: *In Silent Prayer: A History of the Deaf Community in*

the Archdiocese of Philadelphia. (Available through Amazon.com).

June Goodwin, who was a child when Fr. Russo first began his ministry has said this about Fr. Russo's service to the Deaf Community:

"Fr. Anthony Russo is a truly friend of mine. He entered my life when I was a twelve year old struggling with my identity and his religious influence made an impact in changing my life. I am sure that he put me in the right track which lead me to have a strong faith in God, enjoy the love for my family and friends. He even married my husband, Jim and me, and baptized our children, Michelle, Melissa and Madeline. I really appreciated his loving support and friendship."

Deaf and Hearing alike have great respect for Fr. Anthony Russo and regard him as a man who is truly holy and devoted to building up God's kingdom.



*Submitted by Sister Kathleen Schipani, IHM
Archdiocese of Philadelphia
PCPD/Deaf Apostolate*

Continued from page 5—Deaf Catholicism

in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, simultaneously with the Catholic Educational Association, and organized the Catholic Deaf Conference. The conference was a powerful factor in enlisting the cooperation of bishops, priests and laymen in ameliorating the education conditions of the Deaf Catholics.

As a result of the conference in Milwaukee, out of a total number of 139 schools for the Deaf, there were 13 Catholic Schools for the Deaf with the following enrollment: St. Joseph's School for the Deaf, Oakland, California, 39; Ephpheta School for the Deaf, Chicago, Illinois, 72; Institute of the Holy Rosary, Chicuba, Louisiana, 37; St. Francis Xavier's School, Baltimore, Maryland, 35; St. Louis, Missouri, 40; St. Joseph's School, Longwood, Missouri, 20; Notre Dame School, Cincinnati, Ohio, 12; St. John's Institute, St. Francis, Wisconsin, 71; St. Joseph's Schools, New York City, 417; Le Couteulx, St. Mary's Institution, Buffalo, New York, 176 – making in all 1002 Deaf pupils in Catholic Schools. It will be noticed that, in the four Catholic Schools for the deaf in New York, which had a Deaf population of about 10,000, 593 children were cared for, and that, in nine Catholic Schools scattered throughout the remaining portion of the United States, where there is a Deaf population eight times greater than that of the state of New York, only 409 were provided for. This means that if all the states were as generous as New York in caring for deaf children, there would be, if adequate facilities were provided, 4744 deaf children in Catholic schools for the deaf outside of the state of New York.

With the exception of the New York institutions for the deaf, the other Catholic institutions were almost entirely dependent upon the charity of religious sisterhoods. Pupils of all denominations were admitted. Until 1870, the Catholic schools for the deaf established in the United States were almost entirely boarding schools. In addition to the deaf, there are some individuals who not only were deaf but also blind. Sister Dosithea of the Le Couteulx, St. Mary's Institution, Buffalo taught Clarence Selby, a deaf-blind poet and author, and Sisters of St. Joseph in St. Louis who instructed Lottie Sullivan for her first Holy Communion.

The period between 1880 and 1947 does not give much information about the progress of Deaf

Catholics. It was a period marked by the First World War, the Great Depression and the Second World War and some of today's Deaf senior citizens born during that period recount the hard times they face.

In 1949, Deaf Catholics, who graduated from Catholic schools for the deaf and had received religious instruction, gathered in Toronto, Canada for the first congress to discuss how they can be involved in the affairs of the Catholic Church especially with regard to Deaf Ministry and training of Deaf Pastoral Workers. As expected, most of the Deaf delegates came from Buffalo in the State of New York where a large number of them has been educated. Others came from Detroit and Toronto. They worked with ten priests to lay plans for an International Organization. Cardinal James McGuigan, the Archbishop of Toronto, gave the project his approval. From these initial efforts evolved the International Catholic Deaf Association (ICDA).

However, the organization is only active in Canada and United States. ICDA – Canada was established in 1974, and the United States was established in 1987 at the national convention in Hartford, Connecticut. The first officers of the ICDA – US were elected at the convention that met in Portland, Oregon.

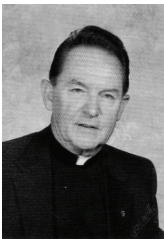
The form of government of ICDA is a six member Board of Directors consisting of the President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, Chaplain, and immediate Past President. With the possible exception of the Chaplain, all Board of Directors are Deaf. The ICDA – US constitution was adopted in July 1991 at the convention in Cleveland, Ohio. The ICDA membership is comprised of local chapters and individual members. Local chapters are affiliated with ICDA – US, but govern and manage their own activities in accordance with the Constitution and by – laws of the ICDA – US. Currently there are 108 local chapters. The United States is divided into six regions. Each region is entitled to have an office, and to better unite, serve, and promote growth in the faith of the members and local chapters within their region. Each member of the ICDA – US receives *The Deaf Catholic*, the official publication of the ICDA, which is published five times a year. Business and workshop conventions are held to bring together delegates and moderators, regional representatives and members from each of the

Continued next page

Continued from previous page

United States chapters to allow for the exchange of ideas, sharing of knowledge, and a forum for making plans to further the apostolic work among the Deaf people in the United States.

Earlier on, when ICDA gathered in 1971 in Baltimore, Maryland, it was suggested that Ministry for Deaf Catholics needed a national voice that might express the spiritual needs of the American Deaf Catholic Community and also an organization that would focus on updating the knowledge and skills of pastoral workers with Deaf persons and act as a support group for pastoral workers. After a weeklong discussion, the moderators voted to establish a National Catholic Office for the Deaf (NCOD) that might eventually be affiliated with the National Conference for Catholic Bishops (NCCB). Fr. David Walsh, C.Ss.R, was elected the Executive Director. The sisters in attendance voted to support the decision of the moderators.



Rev. David Walsh C.S.s.R.

In a meeting with Cardinal John Carberry, the Archbishop of St. Louis, the Episcopal Moderator of ICDA, Fr. Walsh was assured that approval of the United States Catholic Conference (USCC) or National Conference of Catholic Bishops (NCCB) was not necessary to use the title National Catholic Office for the Deaf.

Accordingly, from that time on the Cursillos, Pastoral Weeks, Catholic Deaf Community Weeks, Religious Education Summer workshops were organized out of NCOD office of Fr. Walsh at Ligouri, Missouri. Later "Listening" (Currently known as "Vision Magazine") and Radar, a newsletter for pastoral workers, were prepared and mailed from Ligouri to parishes for the Deaf and Catholic deaf centers.

By 1973, a year and half after the establishment of NCOD, a national steering committee consisting of priests, sisters and lay pastoral workers, had been elected and had held national meetings to prepare the NCOD Constitution and By Laws. These meetings were held in Glenview, IL, West End, NJ, and Washington D.C. In 1973, the NCOD Board of Directors, through the efforts of Cardinal John Carberry, arranged a meeting with the USCC officials in Washington D.C. to discuss the possibility of NCOD becoming part of USCC. This was not acceptable to bishops since they did not want to single out one group of persons with a disability to establish

an office under the USCC. Subsequently, the USCC established the National Catholic Office for Persons with Disabilities.

However, the NCOD continued its programs and its membership grew. In 1976, through the strong support of the Loyal Christian Benefit Association (LCBA), with headquarters in Erie, Pennsylvania, NCOD was able to move to Washington D.C. Space was obtained at Trinity College. Fr. Walsh remained Executive Director until 1980 when Sr. Alverna Hollis, O.P., was hired. Besides the regular duties of the office, under the guidance, grant monies were received to support more development of religious education material for deaf children; a book was published on "Signs of Catholic Liturgy and Education", as well as two small booklets on the Sacraments. The National Office continued to be a resource for diocesan ministries with Deaf people, and more lay people, especially Deaf persons, became pastoral workers. The office moved to the National Association of the Deaf building in 1981.

Nora Letourneau, Ph.D. succeeded Sr. Alverna in 1998. NCOD continued to grow and to act as a clearinghouse on information concerning the Church's ministry with Deaf Catholics. In 1992 the office published the results of a five year study of the spirituality of Deaf persons entitled, "Eye Centered: A Study of the Spirituality of Deaf People with implications for Pastoral Ministry", which reflects the insights, hard work and faith journeys of many Deaf persons more meaningful." The National Office continues to pursue funding for special projects such as leadership workshops for Catholic Deaf leaders, for interpreters in religious settings and for catechists working with Deaf children and youth. In 1995, the office published a policy statement on working with Sign Language interpreters in Catholic Religious settings.

In September 1995, the NCOD again moved to its present site at the Archdiocese of Washington Catholic Deaf Center in Landover Hills, Maryland. Here it continues its role as advocate for making services and programs for spiritual growth accessible to Deaf persons. In October of 1997, Arvilla Rank became the first Deaf Executive Director of NCOD. Today more than ever this national voice is needed. Working together with the ICDA and with ecumenical groups, it is hoped that more and more deaf persons will become pastoral workers. This last decade has truly become "The Decade of Deaf Ministry" and has prepared the way for the New Millennium in ministry with Deaf persons.

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Continued from page 9—Deaf Catholicism

The story of Deaf Catholicism in America cannot be divorced from the tireless work of Fr. David Walsh, C.Ss.R, a native of St. Louis, Missouri, entered the Redemptorist Order in 1941 and was ordained in 1947. Fr. Walsh passed away on August 13, 2005 at St. Anthony Medical Center in South County, Missouri. As earlier mentioned, he helped found and was the first Executive Director of the National Catholic Office for the Deaf, now based in Maryland.

After another year of studies, he was appointed to what was then called "Deaf Work." He was stationed in New Orleans for five years then moved to Detroit for two years, where he was assigned to parish work with Deaf people. He began visiting all the state schools for the deaf, sought out, and visited with Deaf people in their communities for missions. In 1954, he was named to a parish in Chicago, working closely with the Deaf Community there. A bulletin he published went to some 1,800 Deaf people. The "Louisville Deaf Tidings" labeled Fr. Walsh in 1959 as one of the most popular priests in deaf ministry in America, having preached missions in New York, Los Angeles, Cleveland, Cincinnati, Boston, Washington, San Antonio, Chicago, Detroit, St. Louis, Houston, Philadelphia and others. After

working in Chicago for eight years, he began a 14 year career as a missionary throughout the United States, Puerto Rico and Canada with the International Catholic Deaf Association. He funded his work with the Deaf by giving retreats for priests and religious and preaching at missions for the hearing.

Fr. David Walsh was known for crusading for the recognition of the important role deaf ministry plays in the life of the Church, and he became a founding board member of what is now the National Catholic Partnership on Disability. He retired from the National Catholic Office for the Deaf in 1980 and took charge of the Knights of Columbus Deaf Program in the Diocese of Corpus Christi, Texas, which later became the Diocesan Office for Persons with Disabilities. Twice he served as Chairman of the Mayor's Committee for the Employment of Disabled Persons. He would host Christmas dinners attended by the local bishop and more than 1,000 people. In 2002, he received the Jefferson Volunteer Award in Corpus Christi, in part as recognition for his "Spiritual Olympics" that helped parents of any denomination who had children with disabilities to become religiously active. Fr. Walsh retired to Liguori, Missouri in 2003 and the heavenly Father

Family Losses

August 14—Nancy Huber

Nancy Huber passed away the morning of Saturday, August 14, 2010 in the company of family and friends. The funeral Mass was held at St. Francis Borgia Deaf Center. Nancy was a beloved member of NCOD and a principal founding member. In January 2008, Nancy received the Father David Walsh Pastoral Worker of the Year Award presented by the National Catholic Office for the Deaf.

September 26—Leonara Wigginton

Leonara Wigginton, mother of Sister Rita Wigginton, passed away on Sunday, September 26, 2010 after 9 days in the ICU. She was 89 years old. The funeral was held at St. Peter the Apostle in Louisville, KY. Expressions of sympathy can be made to the Ministry Formation Program, Chicago., IL.

October 13—Monique Mouton

Monique Ann Mouton, 45, passed away peacefully on Wednesday, October 13, 2010 following open heart surgery. A Mass of Christian Burial was held at Sts. Peter and Paul Catholic Church in Scott, LA. Monique was a beloved member of NCOD and recently served on the Board of Directors as the South Representative. We will all miss her infectious smile and love of life.

Just for Fun!



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National Catholic Office for the Deaf Membership Form

- New Member
 Renewal
 Vision only

Name: _____

Title: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Country: _____

Diocese: _____

- Deaf/Hard of Hearing
 Deaf-Blind
 Hearing

Phone (W): _____ TTY Voice Both VP

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