



Vision

The National Catholic Office for the Deaf

**Spring
2011**

Page 2

From the Board

Page 3

Sr. Linda Roby

Page 6

David Walsh Award

Page 8

Sr. Pat Francis

Page 10

DeaFest 2011

Page 12

NTID's New
President

Page 16

Christopher Klusman

Page 18

Losses

Page 19

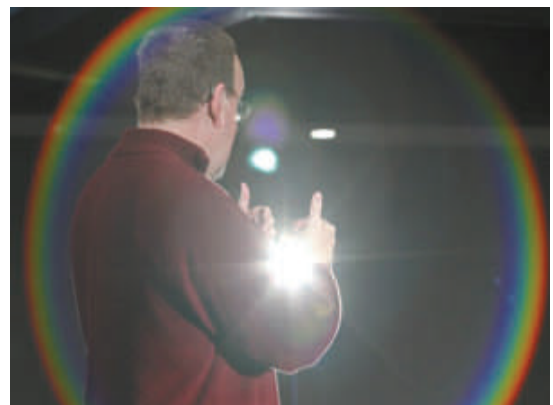
Join NCOD

National Deaf Catholic Meeting Focuses On Teens

STEPHEN O'KANE, Staff Writer
The Georgia Bulletin

ATLANTA—It was during an International Catholic Deaf Association conference in Baltimore in 1971 that members of the deaf community decided it was time to have a national voice. The conference served as a springboard for the deaf community to express its spiritual needs and establish the National Catholic Office for the Deaf, which this year marks 40 years of ministry.

The office's 2011 Pastoral Week Conference, held from Jan. 14 to 18 in Atlanta, followed the theme "Renewing the Vision," which honored the accomplishments of these four decades of ministry even as the group also



During his Jan. 16 presentation at the National Catholic Office for the Deaf (NCOD) annual Pastoral Week, Bob Ayres discusses the importance of effectively reaching out to young deaf and hard of hearing people today. Ayres is the cofounder and president/CEO of Deaf Youth Ministries, Inc.

(Photos by Michael Alexander)

Continued on page 4—National

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

Greetings members and friends,

WOW! What a wonderful Pastoral Week we had in Atlanta. The week was covered by the Georgia Bulletin of the Archdiocese of Atlanta. Coverage begins on page 1.

In this issue we wanted to highlight several of our Sisters who work so diligently for the deaf community. The article on Sr. Linda Roby can be found on page 3 and an interview with Sr. Pat Francis is featured on page 8.

If you made it to Pastoral Week you watched as a very surprised and humbled Arvilla Rank received the Father David Walsh Award for her many years serving the deaf community. Read all about Arvilla's accomplishments on page 6.

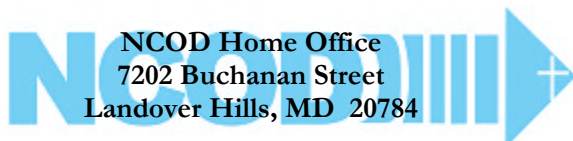
NTID has a new President. Read all about Dr. Gerard J. Buckley starting on page 12. Christopher Klusman will be ordained on May 21, 2011. You can learn all about him on page 16.

The Board of Directors wishes you all the blessings of this joyous Easter Season.

*Happy Reading,
NCOD Board of Directors*

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Former Itinerant Teacher Claims ‘Dual Citizenship’

by Sister Deanna Carr, BVM

Perhaps you have had the experience yourself. You receive a gift on a special occasion and unwrap it only to find a second gift folded inside—a surprise within a surprise. For BVM Linda Roby, life as a Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary is unfolding today as she continues to live out a “gift within a gift.”

Questions as a Novice Lead to Life Ministry

As a novice living in the light of Vatican II, some of Linda’s earliest community memories involved questions. “Who am I as a person, as a woman religious?” “How can I best prepare for a life of discipleship as a BVM?” “What about my strengths, my gifts?” “Do I sense a calling to some particular form of ministry?”

She had always had an interest in special education and mentioned this in conversation with Sister M. Teresian Verweil, BVM, who made a suggestion that was to have lifelong significance for Linda. “Why not,” she proposed, “visit with Sister M. LaSalette Zegers, BVM?”

At the time, LaSalette and others were pioneering in the field of Deaf Education. Their modest beginnings, persistence and dedication were paying off. They were on the way—establishing the first Catholic day school program for the Deaf in Chicago in 1952. When Linda contacted her, LaSalette invited her to come and tutor some of her Deaf students during the summer. With that experience, Linda discovered her life’s mission.

Being Part of Two Worlds Reflects BVM Pioneer Spirit

Linda received her master’s degree in Special Education for the Deaf, and then began teaching at St. John School for the Deaf in Milwaukee, Wis. She later became an “itinerant teacher,” working with 13 children in 11 different schools in Portland, Ore.

The questions of her novice days were answered in the challenge, diversity and exhilaration of it all. Linda came to hold a kind of “dual citizenship.” She was both a part of a hearing world with its own language and lifestyle, and was increasingly at home in another “homeland”—one with its own unique language, American Sign Language (ASL); its common experience; its treasury of stories; and its strong and growing community life.



Linda received the first gift, the gift of membership in a community in which pioneering is *integral to our heritage*. Over 35 years later, Linda is still eagerly unwrapping the second gift, citizenship in an adoptive homeland that also has claims upon her heart.

The first BVM to serve in pastoral ministry among the Deaf, Linda was named Director of Catholic Deaf Ministry for the Archdiocese of Portland, Ore., in 1977. From the onset she was intent on “training leaders within and beyond the church.” Linda credits Archbishop John Vlazny of Portland with sustaining funding for this office despite painful staffing cuts necessitated by bankruptcy. For the bishop, there was never a question that this and other indispensable diocesan ministries would flourish. Through many challenges he defended his commitment to Deaf ministry and ministry and pastoral services for people with disabilities, saying, “These are the people for whom we will be held accountable in heaven.”

Continued on page 8—Roby 3

Continued from page 1—National

looked at the challenges they now face moving forward. A special focus was given to ministering to deaf teens, a group in the deaf community that is often left untouched.

Deb Garner, who coordinates services to deaf Catholics for the Atlanta Archdiocese, said the deaf community faces its own unique challenges in today's world.



Father Shawn Carey, center, assistant director of the deaf apostolate for the Archdiocese of Boston leads the congregation as they pray the Our Father in American Sign Language. Joining Father Carey on the altar are (l-r) Deacon Bill Koch and Redemptorist Father Leonard Broniak of the Archdiocese of the St. Dominic Deaf Center, Houston, Texas, Bishop Kevin Rhoades, of Fort Wayne-South Bend, Ind. and episcopal moderator for the NCOD, and NCOD board of director Father Paul Zirimenya of San Francisco.

“Deaf Catholics experience a form of isolation not seen by other cultural groups,” said Garner, a member of the NCOD’s board of directors and Southeast regional president.

“Even though parents are the primary teachers of the Catholic faith, many deaf Catholics have received little faith formation from their family due to the inability of many hearing parents to communicate with their deaf children. For this reason parents turn to the Church in greater need when they have a deaf child,” she said.

Featuring nationally recognized presenters and opportunities for networking, the Pastoral Week Conference gave attendees access to many resources for their own ministries. Speakers included Amy Cohen Efron, who has worked in deaf children’s ministry for 15 years, and Father Joseph Mulcrone, director of the Catholic Office of the Deaf for the Archdiocese of Chicago.

Also among the week’s presenters was Bob Ayres, president of DeafYouth Ministries, an organization that focuses specifically on ministry to deaf and hard of hearing teenagers and their families. Ayres presented some of the difficulties in working with the deaf but also provided some encouraging words to those who are involved in this important ministry.

Things have changed in the deaf world, Ayres signed to the crowd, adding that the deaf community is more scattered and spread out than ever before. The majority of young deaf students are attending mainstream schools while only a small portion, about 20 percent according to Ayres, are attending schools specifically designed for the deaf.

“Young people will not come looking for us. We must look for them,” he said.



(L-r) Michelle Klinger, Christine Eckel, and Cynthia Quattrone watch during the morning presentation given in American Sign Language. All three hearing-impaired women are members of Transfiguration Church, Marietta.

“It is often difficult to keep teenagers, especially deaf teens, interested in their faith formation,” added Garner. “The workshops for this conference focused on teens and the use of technology to keep their interest.”

Guests at the conference included Atlanta Auxiliary Bishop Luis Zarama, who celebrated Mass for the attendees, and Bishop Kevin Rhoades of Fort Wayne-South Bend, Ind. Garner said it was crucial to have these two church leaders present at the conference.

“It is very important that the bishops are aware

Continued on page 5—National

Continued from page 4—National

of the needs of this marginalized community especially when economic challenges are causing the closing of many programs,” said Garner.

According to its website, the NCOD currently serves approximately 5.7 million deaf and hard of hearing Catholics through its pastoral ministry and special advocacy to bishops, pastors and families who have deaf children. By offering training to pastoral workers, assistance to parents with deaf children, and shared opportunities for religious education, retreat and renewal programs, the NCOD continues to be a strong presence in the deaf community.

“NCOD was established to provide support for pastoral workers who work with the deaf, children and adults. Teaching materials have required adaptation for use with deaf students in preparation for the sacraments. Over the years, NCOD has been involved in developing many sacramental prep materials. Another focus of NCOD is advocating for support of the ministry throughout the country,” said Garner.

Garner also said that the Catholic Church is losing many of its deaf members to other denominations since these faith communities are willing to provide the necessary services. The conference was designed to be an encouragement to those already involved in the ministry to seek new ways to reach deaf youth and inspire them to become involved in their own faith formation. “Especially during this time of ‘Catholics Come Home’ we need to dig deep to support the programs that are available within the Catholic Church and bring our deaf Catholics home,” she said.

“Most of the attendees were very pleased with the programming presented at this year’s Pastoral Week,” Garner said. “The members of NCOD attend Pastoral Week to network and support each other. They also attend for their own personal spiritual renewal. And, of course, to rekindle friendships made at past Pastoral Week conferences.”

Reprinted with permission from the Georgia Bulletin

Continued from page 3—Roby

Communication Technology Brings Deaf and Hearing Communities Closer

Throughout years of sweeping change, Linda continued to contribute to the Deaf community according to her gifts and circumstances. Pioneers at St. Gregory School in Chicago could hardly have envisioned the scope of such change. Not many years ago communication with the Deaf could only happen face to face. Today communication has been greatly enhanced through technology.

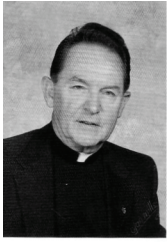
Initially TTY phones, a telecommunications device about the size of a laptop, provided an alternative to talking and listening. Text was transmitted live, via a phone line, to a compatible device that used a similar communication protocol. Today most Deaf prefer to communicate instantaneously through e-mail and text messaging.

Videophones give the Deaf an opportunity to communicate with each other using their own (ASL) language. Relay operators who read and interpret sign language make it possible for the Deaf person to make calls to phone users who are not Deaf, and enable those not proficient in sign to communicate with members of the Deaf community.

“Carry over” services facilitate telephone communication with people who can hear but cannot speak (“hear carry over” or HCO), or people who cannot hear but are able to speak (“voice carry over” or VCO).

Nor are dramatic changes in Deaf ministry confined to technology. Ministry among the Deaf is increasingly in the hands of professionally-trained lay ministers who are themselves Deaf and can model Deaf culture to co-workers and to hearing parents of children who are Deaf. Many presenters at regional and national conferences on pastoral ministry within the Deaf community are, themselves, Deaf. Wherever possible, liturgies are being celebrated by Deaf priests within a signing community.

Continued on page 15—Roby



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

2011 Father David Walsh Pastoral Worker of the Year Award

Arvilla Rank

Hi NCOD members, friends, families, and Deaf Community, Deb Garner had asked me to do an article on our current Fr. David Walsh Pastoral Worker of the year Award winner, Arvilla Rank. When our Board announced our winner at the annual Pastoral Week in Atlanta, Arvilla got a long standing ovation! It was a surprise to Arvilla! Arvilla was not expecting it. Congratulations, Arvilla.

It was a good surprise. I thought, Arvilla, has done great things for NCOD and for our Deaf Community. Arvilla is a true “trailblazer” among us. Arvilla is a pastoral worker, a friend, a former executive director for NCOD, and a believer in Christ Jesus. Arvilla has opened the doors for many of us and stood up for all of us. NCOD today is what Arvilla has shared her vision for Deaf Catholics and for pastoral workers and for our future generations as well. It is an honor to be able to work with Arvilla on this article.

I am sharing with you, my interview with Arvilla. Enjoy.

1. How did you become Deaf?

I became deaf from Spinal Meningitis when I was eight years old.

2. When did you start working for Deaf community?

I first began teaching Deaf people in the early 1960’s. I volunteered at St. Mary’s Parish in Fond

du Lac, Wisconsin. I began teaching CCD to a 9-year-old Hard of Hearing boy and taught for three years before I moved to Milwaukee. I did not sign at that time and neither did he. The Pastor told me he gained in confidence while I was teaching him. I could not hear at all. He had some hearing.

3. When did you start working for NCOD?

My first involvement with NCOD came when the International Catholic Deaf Association (ICDA) Board of Directors selected me to be their first representative to the NCOD Board of Directors.

I served on the NCOD Board the first two years. I attended Board meetings but was unable to stay for Pastoral Week because I was teaching at St. John’s School for the Deaf and could not get off. After two years, I suggested to the ICDA Board that it would be best to have one of their Board members serve as representative. This would allow for more efficient sharing between the Boards. Since that time, the ICDA Board Representative has always been a Board member.

I became a member of NCOD when membership became available. I attended the 25th anniversary conference of NCOD in 1996. I have attended every Conference since that time.

4. What and Why made you interested in working within the Deaf Ministry?



Continued on page 7—Arvilla

Continued from page 6—Arvilla

from teaching the boy CCD than the work I did for a living. I moved to Milwaukee to teach at St. John's School for the Deaf. I taught business education and mathematics for 15 years. I earned master's degrees in business education and special (Deaf) education. After leaving St. John's my work was not in Catholic Institutions, but the positions I held helped me to prepare to become the Executive Director of NCOD. I worked as an independent living coordinator, a Program and Planning analyst, and the Director of the Office for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing.

In Milwaukee I became involved in the International Catholic Deaf Association (ICDA). I served in various offices and was Chair of the international convention in 1980. In 1972 I began attending International ICDA Conventions. I served the ICDA Board as representative to the Priests/Pastoral Workers meetings for several years. In the late 1970's I served as secretary of ICDA for two years. When Alfred Hoffmeister died during his term as Vice-President, the Board appointed me to finish the term. From 1981 to 1985 I served as the first elected female president of ICDA, though not the first woman to serve as president. I was on this Board for 13 years.

I was fortunate to be among the people who made the first Deaf Cursillo in 1970. This was my first meeting with many priests from throughout the country who signed well. This was also my first meeting with Deaf adults who were active in the Church. Through the years, I have served on many Cursillo teams. In the early 1990s, the National Deaf Cursillo invited me to serve as the first Lay Director along with Timothy Owens and Sr. Ann Albrecht. I remain Director until I began working for NCOD.

5. What is your best achievement for NCOD?

NCOD received funds to develop resources to use in Deaf and Hard of Hearing Ministry. I believe the American Sign Language Mass responses will be especially important in the future. Also valuable for the future of Deaf and Hard of Hearing Ministry are the presentations and meetings with the Bishops conference.

6. What is your best achievement in life?

I have been in a position many times through the years where I can help to make the community, and especially our Church, more Deaf friendly.

7. What is your motto?

I don't really have a motto. What comes to mind with this question is something I read during a retreat and which I now have on my refrigerator, "Do not follow where the path may lead—go instead, where there is no path and leave a trail".

8. What advice can you give to current and future pastoral workers?

Meet Deaf and Hard of Hearing people where they are and empower them. It is more important to learn their language than to insist they learn ours. Because of my early years of hearing, my first language is English. I wish very much I had learned sign language long before I did—I was 30 years old before I began to learn signs of any kind.

9. Any last comments?

THANK YOU very much, NCOD Members and Board of Directors, for the great honor of receiving the Fr. David Walsh Award. **THANK YOU** for all of your support through the years. I hope and pray that I can continue to use my skills to serve the Lord in the years ahead.



My Interview with Sr. Pat Francis, O.P.

In this edition of Vision, our board would like to put a focus on our women religious and how women religious have influenced our Deaf Ministry today.

I have known Sr. Pat Francis over the years through meeting her at our annual pastoral week. It usually begins with “Hi, how are you? What’s new or how was your year in Pastoral Ministry? It was usually “small talk” until I began to know Sr. Pat more when I went to St. Thomas University for my Master’s program in Pastoral Ministry. Sr. Pat Francis has a wealth of knowledge in pastoral counseling and also a wealth of knowledge with NCOD’s history and the early founders of NCOD. Sr. Pat Francis became my “hidden” jewel because during the early days of NCOD, Deaf Pastoral Workers were not there yet.

This past NCOD Pastoral Week, we celebrated our 40th year as an organization. Our Deaf Ministry has evolved over the years. While I recognize there are a lot of older pastoral workers in our vineyard who paved the way for us today, Sr. Pat Francis continues to help Deaf Catholic Community in her own way today. This is her story.

How long have you been a sister? I joined my community, the Dominican Sisters of Springfield, IL in 1966. I professed my vows in 1968. Thus, I am 43 years professed.

Why do you feel called to be a sister? I feel called to be a sister because being a sister provides a way of life in which I can respond fully to the Gospel by living the vows in community, being faithful to prayer and study, and responsive to the needs of others through ministry. Being a sister allows me to preach the Gospel of God’s love first with those with whom I live and then to others, not by what I say, but by how I am in relationship with them.

What is your current position or title? I am a clinical psychologist and the Director of Counseling Services at Central DuPage Pastoral Counseling Center in Carol Stream, IL. I also

present workshops, provide spiritual direction/companionship, and facilitate retreats. I do this with both hearing and deaf people.

What do you see needed in today’s Deaf Catholic’s world? Deaf people could likely give a more accurate response to this question, so I would love to see the question addressed to them too. I think Deaf Catholics need more visual access to the Church. Thus, I see a need for more priests to be skilled signers who provide the sacraments, pastoral care, and catechesis in sign language. I see a need for more Deaf people to assume leadership roles in the Church and that requires they receive the formation and catechesis visually, in sign language and with deaf education methodology and with sensitivity to elements of Deaf Culture. I think the Church has a responsibility to provide that education, formation and access. With many of Catholic Deaf Schools now closed, the Church has even greater responsibility for providing catechesis to the Deaf Community on the local level. I think the papers presented to the Bishops last November, 2009, at the Synod Hall in Rome detailed the needs that I see in today’s Catholic Deaf World. These are on the web site of the International Catholic Foundation for the Service of Deaf People (ICF). There was also a comprehensive list of recommendations that the Bishops approved at that meeting.

What advice can you give to Deaf Women who may be thinking about becoming a nun or lay pastoral worker? If someone is thinking of becoming a religious sister or lay pastoral worker, I would encourage the person to pray and discern that call with a spiritual director. The person discerning may also find talking to religious sisters and lay pastoral workers about their life helpful. Sister Janet Marchesani, OP of New York has worked in formation in her religious community. She and the sisters in her local house have welcomed deaf women to live with them as they do their initial discernment regarding religious life. The difficulty of living in a religious community of hearing sisters is that not all the sisters sign. Deaf women need to be able to communicate with other community members.

Continued on page 18—Francis

The Three Trees

Once upon a mountain top, three little trees stood and dreamed of what they wanted to become when they grew up. The first little tree looked up at the stars and said: "I want to hold treasure. I want to be covered with gold and filled with precious stones. I'll be the most beautiful treasure chest in the world!" The second little tree looked out at the small stream trickling by on its way to the ocean. "I want to be traveling mighty waters and carrying powerful kings. I'll be the strongest ship in the world!" The third little tree looked down into the valley below where busy men and women worked in a busy town. "I don't want to leave the mountain top at all. I want to grow so tall that when people stop to look at me they'll raise their eyes to heaven and think of God. I will be the tallest tree in the world."

Years passed. The rain came, the sun shone and the little trees grew tall. One day three wood cutters climbed the mountain. The first wood cutter looked at the first tree and said, "This tree is beautiful. It is perfect for me." With a swoop of his shining ax, the first tree fell. "Now I shall make a beautiful chest, I shall hold wonderful treasure!" the first tree said.

The second wood cutter looked at the second tree and said, "This tree is strong. It's perfect for me." With a swoop of his shining ax, the second tree fell. "Now I shall sail mighty waters!" thought the second tree. "I shall be a strong ship for mighty kings!"

The third tree felt her heart sink when the last wood cutter looked her way. She stood straight and tall and pointed bravely to heaven. But the wood cutter never even looked up. "Any kind of tree will do for me." He muttered. With a swoop of his shining ax, the third tree fell.

The first tree rejoiced when the wood cutter brought her to a carpenter's shop. But the carpenter fashioned the tree into a feed box for animals. The once beautiful tree was not covered with gold, or treasure. She was coated with saw dust and filled with hay for hungry farm animals. The second tree smiled when the wood cutter took her to a shipyard, but no mighty sailing ship was made that day. Instead the once strong

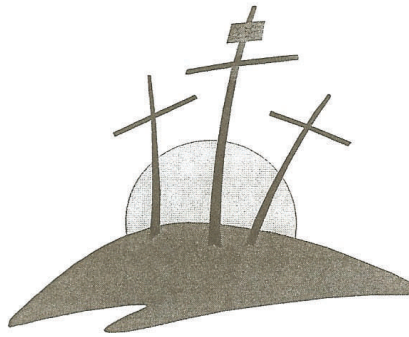
tree was hammered and awed into a simple fishing boat. She was too small and too weak to sail to an ocean, or even a river, instead she was taken to a little lake. The third tree was confused when the wood cutter cut her into strong beams and left her in a lumberyard. "What happened?" The once tall tree wondered. "All I ever wanted was to stay on the mountain top and point to God..."

Many days and nights passed. The three trees nearly forgot their dreams. But one night, golden starlight poured over the first tree as a young woman placed her newborn baby in the feed box. "I wish I could make a cradle for him." Her husband whispered. The mother squeezed his hand and smiled as the starlight shone on the smooth and sturdy wood. "This manger is beautiful." She said. And suddenly the first tree knew he was holding the greatest treasure in the world.

One evening a tired traveler and his friends crowded into the old fishing boat. The traveler fell asleep as the second tree quietly sailed out into the lake. Soon a thundering and a thrashing storm arose. The little tree shuddered. She knew she did not have the strength to carry so many passengers safely through the wind and the rain. The tired man awoke. He stood up, stretched out his hand, and said, "Peace." The storm stopped as quickly as it had begun. And suddenly the second tree knew he was carrying the king of heaven and earth.

One Friday morning, the third tree was startled when her beams were yanked from the forgotten wood pile. She flinched as she was carried through an angry jeering crowd. She shuddered when soldiers nailed a man's hand to her. She felt ugly and harsh and cruel. But on Sunday morning, when the sun rose and the earth trembled with joy beneath her, the third tree knew that God's love had changed everything. It had made the third tree strong. And every time people thought of the third tree, they would think of God. That was better than being the tallest tree in the world.

Author: Unknown



Our First Annual New Jersey Catholic DeaFest 2011 New Brunswick, NJ

by Kate Slosar

In September, 2010, our New Jersey Pastoral Workers met to discuss on ways we can improve our pastoral outreach and responsibilities to our Deaf Catholic Community in the State of New Jersey. Our Pastoral Workers represent our 5 dioceses: the Archdiocese of Newark, Diocese of Camden, Diocese of Metuchen, Diocese of Paterson, and Diocese of Trenton. We were aware of the challenges that our Deaf Community faced. Challenges like, no signed mass, or too far to go for an interpreted mass. Often, our Deaf Catholics would go to church but be there alone or with a few other Deaf Catholics instead of a large group. We came up with an idea of doing a New Jersey Catholic DeaFest where we would celebrate our faith and allow our deaf parishioners to come and meet new friends and old friends in a welcoming atmosphere.



On March 19, we hosted the First Annual New Jersey Catholic DeaFest at Rutgers University, Catholic Center. It was in a “house” and our theme was “My house shall be a house of prayer for all people” (*Isaiah 56:7*). We were thinking maybe 40

people would come. No! We had close to 125 people attend. Standing room only in some cases! It was a huge success for all of us, Deaf Catholics and pastoral workers. It was more than what we had imagined. We had Kate Slosar doing the keynote on “Faith in Action” and three afternoon workshops by Julie Doerrmann “Road to Recovery”, Fr. Joe Goode “Catholic Symbols” and Deacon Tom Smith “The Prodigal Son”. We had a great mix of Deaf, Hard-of-Hearing and Hearing people with interpreters and CART accessibility throughout. It brought unity and strong bond of Community among our people. I

will share with you a few comments from our attendees:

“It seemed as though that the Holy Spirit led all of us Deaf Communities and Pastoral Workers together to work with the Catholic Church and it shows that God is at work in each of us.”

“It was awesome and lot better than I expected. I was really inspired with lots of people coming out from all over New Jersey! I never thought this would happen. I am sure our people felt good and learned more about their faith.”

“I liked it. It is first time, new experience for me.”

“Kate talked about main topic “Faith”, and Water, Air, Fire, Earth, Ritual of Faith = W A F E R.

On Fr. Goode’s presentation : “Fr. Goode taught us names of things I didn’t know had names on them things like priest chair, tabernacle, chism and I learned that there is no American Pope yet!” “Fr. Goode explained about History of Catholic Church and its believers.”

On Deacon’s Tom presentation: “Deacon Tom was trying to show us that forgiveness is not easy to do”. “God the Father has great love for us to show His kindness and great mercy and forgiveness for us sinners no matter how small and how great our sins are.

“Deacon Tom explained about the importance of forgiveness to others whenever I feel hurt from other people’s actions.”

On Julie Doerrmann’s presentation: Julie brought someone with her who is going through her own

Continued on page 11—DeaFest

recovery journey. She is recovering from drugs. Her journey has added faith to her life. She now attends bible study provided by Julie's program.

This Catholic DeaFest brought us non-believers and believers together under one house and our house was a "house of prayer". It also brings us

the freedom able to express our questions and our comments in a good discussion on Catholic Faith. We are "faith in action", we are all God's "prodigal children", we are "Catholic symbols", and we are on the "road to recovery" to God in our faith journey.



Masters Degree in Pastoral Ministry with Specialization in Deaf Ministry

**St. Thomas University School of Theology
and Ministry, Miami, FL**

This program prepares men and women to serve as spiritual leaders in deaf communities, churches, and ministries both at home and abroad. It has an on-campus component (one week in January and two weeks in June) with the remaining coursework completed online. On-campus classes are taught in ASL or are fully interpreted. Next term begins June, 2011.

See website for details:

<http://budurl.com/DeafMinistry>



National Deaf Cursillo #63
September 29 – October 2nd
6:30pm Thursday to Sunday 3pm
\$225.00 whole weekend (bed and meals)

"Walking the Waves with Jesus"
St. Mary by the Sea
Cape May Point, NJ
at Corner of Lincoln and Leigh Ave.

Wonderful experience! We can't really explain it, just come and see.
Feel the Holy Spirit moving! You will meet new friends and old friends

Want to go? Contact Kate Slosar, Local Coordinator
Deadline: August 31, 2011
deafcurs63@aol.com
www.deafcursillo.net

NTID's New President: An Interview with Dr. Gerard J. Buckley

by Pamela L. Carmichael

In November 2010, after an extensive national search, RIT President William Destler appointed Dr. Gerard J. Buckley, SVP '74, '78, to the position of NTID president and RIT vice president and dean. Buckley is the first alumnus in NTID's history to be named president and assume leadership of the college. With 20 years of dedicated service to NTID, most recently as assistant vice president for college advancement, Buckley is well positioned to take the college to the next level. *FOCUS* interviewed Dr. Buckley, whose tenure as NTID president officially started January 1, 2011, to learn more about his priorities as NTID's new leader and his vision for the college's future.

Congratulations on being named NTID president and RIT vice president and dean. With your history here, you bring a wealth of knowledge and experience to the position. When you arrived at RIT/NTID as a student in 1974, did you ever imagine that one day you would lead the college?

When I arrived on campus for the Summer Vestibule Program, I was excited to be entering the Social Work program and to be able to study with deaf, hard-of-hearing and hearing peers. I also had the good fortune to serve in a number of leadership roles while I was a student and to interact with students, faculty and staff from



Student Focused NTID President Gerard J. Buckley chats with a group of students in the Dining Commons on campus. Left to right in photo, Andrew Hursin, Julian Moiwai, Buckley, Maya Arieland Stephen Mur-

throughout the world. I did not imagine at that time that my career path would lead me to one day b e c o m e



president of the college. It's really an honor to have been appointed to this position. I'm excited and energized by the opportunities ahead as we work to ensure that RIT/NTID remains a leader in providing career education for deaf and hard-of-hearing college students.

What do you see as the most significant challenges facing NTID, and how will you address them?

Obviously, the current economy presents challenges. It's harder for families to send their children to college, and with many states experiencing economic difficulties, families are getting less support from vocational rehabilitation and other funding agencies. Like most colleges, NTID has felt the impact of that. But our relationship with the government in Washington is strong, we continue to see record enrollments, and we are moving forward.

The conversion from the quarter system to semesters is both a challenge and an opportunity. Our faculty and administrators are working diligently with our RIT colleagues to conduct a complete curriculum review and ensure a smooth transition. We have pledged that no student's progress toward a degree will be delayed as we make this change.

In everything we do, we will continue to look for opportunities to enhance our students' college experience and ensure our educational excellence. An important aspect of this will be to strengthen our relationships with business and

Continued from page 12—NTID

industry locally and around the country to provide co-op and career opportunities for our students and graduates.

Through the efforts of our NTID Center on Employment, we saw an 89 percent placement rate for our 2009 graduates, an impressive accomplishment given today's national employment situation. We will continue to build on that success.

What are the top priorities you're focusing on in your first year as president?

My top priority is to continue to strengthen our relationship with Congress and the Department of Education regarding budget and operations. I'm also working closely with students, faculty and staff to implement *Strategic Decisions 2020*, a plan that will guide our work for the next decade. We continue to further NTID's integration with RIT, and to foster new and productive relationships with our colleagues throughout the university. We're also actively involved in raising funds to build Imagination Hall, a facility that will become the focal point of our research and innovation efforts for students, faculty and staff. We're seeking to develop new partnerships with business and industry consistent with our national educational mission, and we also have begun taking a more active role in sustainability. We have established an NTID Committee for Sustainable Practices to fully engage the NTID community in this RIT-wide priority. All in all, 2011 is shaping up to be a very exciting, busy and productive year for NTID.

Are today's students different from when you were a student here, and if so, in what ways?

Today's students have grown up in a world where technology has always been an integral part of their lives, so they're incredibly tech savvy. And our students are an increasingly diverse group. More than 30 percent are African-American, Native American, Asian or Latino, and we expect that percentage to continue to grow. More of our students are coming from mainstream high schools, and increasing numbers of them are pursuing degrees in the other colleges of RIT.



A Young Leader NTID President Gerard J. Buckley in 1976 when he served as NTID Student Congress Vice President.

What hasn't changed, though, is the energy, excitement and enthusiasm to learn and grow, and take advantage of the opportunities available to them here.

What are the most significant challenges facing deaf and hard-of-hearing students today? How does NTID help them address those challenges?

The rapid pace of change in our world is a challenge for us all, and deaf and hard-of-hearing students are no exception. Our students have to be well prepared, flexible and ready to hit the ground running when they enter the job market and throughout their careers. We provide the education and training they need, and work hard to instill in them a passion for lifelong learning, so they are prepared to continue updating their skills and are able to respond to the changing needs of employers as business and industry evolves. And as more businesses expand their global reach, we're helping our students understand global issues—ensuring that they have exposure to, and are comfortable with, an increasingly diverse environment.

Appropriate academic preparation for college continues to be another challenge for some deaf and hard-of-hearing students. We have established a number of highly successful outreach programs to begin connecting with students in middle school and high school to get them started thinking about their future and what they need to do to properly prepare for college and career success. *Strategic Decisions 2020* also calls for improving services for underprepared students by working with regional partners to implement intensive summer academic preparation programs

Continued on page 14—NTID

Continued from page 13—NTID

in selected high-growth, ethnically diverse areas of the country. We anticipate developing a plan for implementing this initiative during the 2011-2012 academic year, and conducting a local pilot of the program in summer 2012.

What makes NTID the best choice for deaf and hard-of-hearing students?

RIT/NTID's focus on career education and preparation for career success through experiential learning and cooperative work experiences provide key advantages for deaf and hard-of-hearing students. Graduates leave RIT/NTID ready to succeed in their careers and in life. The NTID Center on Employment also provides a significant advantage for our students and graduates. NCE employment specialists travel the country developing relationships with employers to create job opportunities for deaf and hard-of-hearing students.

Beyond our excellent academic programs and co-op and career focus, we offer deaf and hard-of-hearing students outstanding opportunities for personal growth. The NTID Student Life Team provides programs that engage students outside of the classroom and help them hone their leadership and other "soft" skills that are so critical to lifelong success.

When you combine the career focus and extra-curricular activities with the excellent access and support services we provide, there simply is no better place for deaf and hard-of-hearing students to study, learn and grow.

In your view, what factors have been key to NTID's success thus far?

The key to NTID's success always has been, and will continue to be, our people. Hardworking students and their incredibly supportive parents, highly skilled and dedicated faculty and staff, generous donors, and active, involved alumni all make NTID a very special place, and ensure that we will continue to successfully carry out our mission to provide deaf and hard-of-hearing

students with the best postsecondary education available.

When you think about the future for NTID, what do you see?

We've been educating deaf and hard-of-hearing students for more than 40 years, and we're very good at what we do. We have much to be proud of, and I'm confident our talented students, faculty, staff and alumni will continue doing great things.

As we implement *Strategic Decisions 2020*, our students will remain at the heart of all that we do, and we will continue to build on our past successes and ensure that our students get the skills they need to succeed in their careers and as leaders in their communities.

As I look to the future, I envision that our portfolio of career-focused associate degree programs will be enhanced with programs in areas such as healthcare and sustainability, that our highly successful associate-bachelor's degree programs will continue to grow, and that new bachelor's degree programs will result from collaboration between NTID and RIT's other colleges.

I also see a new generation of outstanding students, faculty and staff thriving, and driving innovation further as they work together in Imagination Hall to produce groundbreaking research that improves the educational and employment success of deaf and hard-of-hearing people nationally and internationally. And I see our alumni network engaged and proud to be an integral part of the RIT/NTID family, helping with recruitment, placement and fundraising work.

Any final thoughts to share without readers?

I am excited to be leading NTID and am looking forward to continuing to work with members of our campus community as together we advance NTID's mission and ensure that the college remains the leader in postsecondary education for deaf and hard-of-hearing students.

Continued on page 15—NTID

Continued on page 14—NTID

Gerard J. Buckley, Ed.D.
National Technical Institute for the Deaf
President Rochester Institute of Technology
Vice President and Dean

Education

Harvard Graduate School of Education, 1999 — Management Development

Ed.D. in Special Education

University of Kansas, 1989

M.S. in Social Work

University of Missouri, 1980

B.S. in Social Work Rochester Institute of Technology/ National Technical Institute for the Deaf, 1978



Dr. Buckley has more than 30 years of experience in higher education, including more than 20 years serving in a variety of capacities at NTID. From 1990 to 1993, Buckley served as chairperson and assistant professor of the Department of Educational Outreach at NTID, followed by five years as director of NTID's Center for Outreach and assistant professor on the RIT/NTID Social Work Support Team. From 1998 to 2003, he served as NTID associate dean for student services, and from 2004 until his appointment as NTID president, held the position of NTID assistant vice president for college advancement with responsibility for the admissions, employment, marketing and outreach operations of the college.

Buckley has maintained an active teaching portfolio over the past 20 years with the RIT Social Work program, which was discontinued in 2005, and with NTID's Master of Science

program in Secondary Education of Students who are Deaf or Hard-of-Hearing. He was awarded tenure in 1998. He has twice been awarded the NTID Faculty/Staff Humanitarian Award by the NTID Student Congress, and was named Distinguished Alumnus for NTID in 1985 and for the College of Liberal Arts in 1996.

Prior to coming to work at NTID in 1990, Buckley spent 10 years at Johnson County Community College in Overland Park, Kansas, where he led Gallaudet University's Regional Center. He has served as president of the Lexington School for the Deaf Board of Trustees in New York City, and is a past president of the American Deafness and Rehabilitation Association. He also has served on the National Advisory Board of the National Institutes of Health's Institute on Deafness at the recommendation of Senator Robert Dole (retired).

Buckley holds a B.S. in Social Work from RIT/NTID, an M.S.W. from the University of Missouri and an Ed.D. in Special Education from the University of Kansas.

He is a native of St. Louis, Mo. His wife, Judy, is a sign language interpreter, and the couple has three adult children: Jennifer, a graduate of RIT/NTID, who recently received her doctorate in veterinary sciences; Timothy, who teaches music education in Monticello, N.Y.; and Ryan, a fourth-year student in RIT's Biomedical Sciences program. Buckley and his wife have one grandchild.

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Continued from page 5—Roby

Websites enable such priests to reach large numbers of those who are active in the Catholic Deaf Community, and also those who do not have access to programs in their own dioceses.

The cultural gap that once distanced the Deaf from the rest of society is narrowing. This is due in part to the *Americans with Disabilities Act (1990)* which

brings with it federal guarantees of equity and dignity. Despite the fact that many dioceses have not yet caught up with its vision, the *Pastoral Statement of U.S. Catholic Bishops on People with Disabilities (1978)* continues to guide the Church's efforts to include the Deaf in Catholic liturgy and in the diverse aspects of parish life including study of scripture and Catholic social teaching.

All Things Are Possible With God!

Meet Christopher Klusman



Christopher Klusman, a seminarian in the Archdiocese of Milwaukee, WI, USA, will be ordained to the priesthood in 2011, God willing. Christopher's beaming, radiant smile seems to be without limit. Wherever he goes he exudes a joy for life and for God that will easily translate into an outstanding priest.

Christopher was deaf at birth. His early years of life were filled with the love and support of family. He has many happy memories of laughter and play with his parents, siblings and grandparents. He is a big fan of Star Wars, Lord of the Rings and Harry Potter. He enjoys playing classic Nintendo games, attending theatre and museums, travel and reading. But most of all, he loves and cherishes time spent with family and close friends. It's easy to see that the love and confidence with which he was formed at home, has lead to his openness to listen to God's voice when he spoke to Christopher's heart.

"The first people that I told about my call to the priesthood were my parents. I can't think of how many sleepless nights I've endured, as I tried to come up with words that could break the news with great ease. It was as if I was trying to think of a perfect proposal for the woman of my dreams. I swear I came up with over 100 ways. When I broke it to my parents, ironically, it wasn't what I planned. It came straight from the heart, since I felt the Holy Spirit prompting me. My parents cried, but they were tears of joy. Later, when more people found out, they were like, "I'm not surprised. It is a great fit." I didn't expect that they felt that way. If I only knew, I wouldn't have put myself through such agony!"

On October 2nd, the Annual Rector's Dinner was held at the Hyatt Hotel in Milwaukee. Christopher stood before a crowd of over 500 supporters of our St. Francis de Sales Seminary and shared his call story. The crowd held their breath in awe of Christopher's beautiful call story and he put a smile on everyone's face when he shared the particular story of how his mentor, Monsignor Glenn Nelson of the Diocese of Rockford, IL "popped the question," that is, he asked Christopher, "Have you thought about the priesthood?" According to Christopher, "Monsignor Nelson is like a superhuman because he amazingly handles his many roles." Along with Fr. Michael Depcik of the Oblates of St. Francis de Sales, Monsignor Glenn Nelson has helped to form and shape Christopher's understanding that "nothing is impossible with God" (Lk 1:37). Through their examples, Christopher has found that there are no obstacles through which God cannot break through to use us as He sees fit.

Life at St. Francis de Sales Seminary is very busy, not at all as Christopher had imagined it to be. His days are filled with prayer to be sure, but there is also much work involved in the training for the priesthood. A typical day usually includes: Morning Prayer at 7 am, Mass at 7:15 am, breakfast at 8 am, carpool to Sacred Heart School of Theology for a full day of classes in intellectual formation, one of the four pillars of formation for Seminarians, then back to St. Francis de Sales Seminary for Evening Prayer at 6 pm, and dinner at 6:30 pm. In addition to these activities, time needs to be made for homework, meetings, and chats with friends, classmates and faculty, jobs, exercise and errands. The life of a Seminarian also includes one day a week for formation that focuses on the other three pillars of formation: human, pastoral and spiritual. For Christopher, one of the highlights of his time in the Seminary is theology 24/7!

Last summer he had the opportunity to spend some time in Boston learning the role of hospital

chaplain. Although it was hard for him to be away from home for the whole summer, he knew it would be a great learning experience. He appreciated this experience because *“I learned so much about suffering and how that is related to us being connected to Jesus’ suffering on the Cross. I can’t say enough how much people truly appreciate even one visit! It is what Jesus said, ‘For I was . . . ill and you cared for me.’ (Mt. 25:35-36).*

Looking ahead to April 24, 2010, Christopher will be ordained to the transitional diaconate. He is optimistic about his vow of celibacy as an opportunity to be exclusive to not one person, but to all people. He hopes for the chance to minister at his home parish with the proclamation of the Gospel, giving homilies and baptizing infants during the summer of 2010.

From there, the next step will be ordination to the Priesthood in 2011! *“How beautiful it would be to be Jesus’ vessel in which He acts through me! It overwhelms me to anticipate the humble moments when Jesus changes the bread and wine to His Body and Blood through me and forgives sins of others at confession through me.”*

Regarding the specific challenges that being deaf may bring to the priesthood, Christopher says, *“I am still amazed to this day on how well I can communicate with the deaf and hearing communities. I feel the ability to do that comes from my family’s faith in me and from God. It is truly a gift from God. Statistics found that the best lip-reader can only read up to about 30 percent, only because there are limited numbers of lip-shapes that can be made. Just try watching a TV show without any sound! Imagine that I can never turn the sound back on, ever! I’ve learned that communication is a two-way street where it helps if we both come half-way to try to make each other understood in a way that is respectful to each other. As for schooling, interpreters ensure that I receive 100%. That is important because then I can pass on what I’ve learned, especially through future homilies, for example. Everything I learned is not just for my own gain, but also for all the others’ gain! In groups of 2 or more people, lip-reading becomes more challenging because it becomes like a game of “Hot Potato.” Ears can track where auditory cues occur. Since my deafness doesn’t pick much auditory*

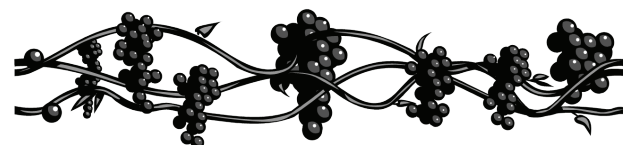
cues, I would often have to look to who is talking next. I learned from my parish internship that meetings, like Parish Council, are accessible with interpreters. Gratefully, I am blessed with the ability to speak, which is unusual for a deaf person. I could do Mass as a presiding priest without an interpreter, but if I attend Mass, an interpreter makes it more accessible (only if the priest doesn’t sign). In the future, there are several situations that can be done with an interpreter and several that do not necessitate an interpreter. But, there is one thing that will never change and that is that I will never have an interpreter during the Sacrament of Confession. The one exception that I have to make is that I won’t be able to use the grill or divider, for I’ll need to be able to see the person’s face to lip-read (not to see who s/he is!). The most exciting thing about my working with the deaf and hearing communities in the future is that I hope to help bridge the two communities more deeply than before. Isn’t that what Jesus calls us to do. . . to unify more of his members into the one and unified Body of Christ united to Him as the Head?”

Let’s all unite in prayer for Christopher as he works through his final years in Seminary, as well as keep all of the seminarians and those discerning a call to the Priesthood and religious life in our prayers. As for Christopher, he really does hear perfectly well; he heard the voice of God calling him to be a priest and he answered “yes”! In any language, that’s a beautiful conversation and a reminder that “all things are possible with God!”

(To learn more about Christopher and all of the fine seminarians studying at St. Francis de Sales Seminary in Milwaukee, WI, visit <http://www.thinkpriest.org/>)

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Sister Mary Helen Seivert, OSF

March 16, 1931 – March 14, 2011

Sister Mary Helen (Marie Goretti) Seivert, OSF, 79, of Holy Family Hall, Dubuque, died Thursday, March 10, 2011, at Holy Family Hall Infirmary. Services were held Monday, March 14, at the Mount St. Francis Chapel. Burial was at Mount Calvary Cemetery.

Born in Ashton, Iowa on March 16, 1931 to Jacob and Helen Menn Seivert, Mary Helen was the oldest on nine children. Hers was not an ordinary childhood because her parents and a brother were hearing impaired. It was Mary Helen who first introduced her siblings to the spoken word. In her autobiography, she wrote of her first day of kindergarten ‘with my mothers holding my hand as we entered into a new world...’ She described how she facilitated communication between her mother and the teacher, signing to her mother and voicing back what her mother signed. This early childhood experience was to become a way of life for her.

Mary Helen had an aunt who was deaf in the Sisters of St. Francis in Milwaukee. This aunt’s happiness and peace in religious life had a great influence on her. However, when in 1950 the time came to answer her own vocational call, she chose to enter the Dubuque Franciscans, the community that had taught her at St. Joseph in Ashton from

first grade through high school.

In 1971, Mary Helen received a grant to attend Gallaudet University in Washington, D.C. Where she received a master’s degree in deaf elementary education. In 1973, she was hired as coordinator for religious education and pastoral work with the deaf for the Des Moines diocese; a position she dearly loved and was to fill for thirty years.

The Office was part of Catholic Charities in Council Bluffs, Iowa which enabled her to be actively involved in Mother of Perpetual Help Parish in Omaha, the parish of the deaf, as well as in the churches of the Des Moines diocese. She signed for liturgies, funeral and weddings, and also in courts, jails, nursing homes, hospitals and job-training facilities. She taught at the Iowa School for the Deaf.

Sister Mary Helen received the State of Iowa Governor’s Service Award in 1990, the Mercy Heritage Award in 1995 and the outstanding Service Award from the Council Bluffs Human Relations Commission in 1998 to name a few of her many honors for her deaf ministry. But her greatest happiness came from providing the deaf with as normal a life as possible.

Excerpts from the program for Sister Mary Helen’s mass of Christian burial, prepared by the Sisters of St. Francis of the Holy Family.

Continued on page 8—Francis

Regarding the call to be a lay pastoral worker, I would strongly support a deaf woman considering and responding to that call. If a woman was considering this option, I would also suggest she consider getting a good education, such as that offered in sign language at St. Thomas University in Miami, Florida. I would also suggest she have a pastoral worker mentor and a spiritual director/companion to help her pay attention to how the Holy Spirit is inspiring and “calling” or inviting her to walk more closely with Christ. Such a practice also helps one remember that ministry is about our response to God’s love for us.

Kate’s final thoughts, In Matthew 9:37 “Then he said to his disciples, “The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few”. Not many are called to work with Deaf Ministry but there is a lot of work to be done. We can continue to pray for the future of our Deaf Ministry in the universal Catholic Church and that it may grow strong in unity with Christ our King. We could spread God’s message so we may all be one in Christ.

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