Summer 2009

Deaf Catholic Youth Week at the DeSales Center

Last summer I was the counselor for the Deaf Catholic Youth Week at the DeSales Center. I thought it was a tremendous camp, I thought that any camper would benefit in a lot of areas if they attended this camp. As a counselor I found that I learned a lot, part of being a counselor is being able to teach young kids about being Catholic, God, Jesus, the Bible, the Catholic history, and so on; but as a counselor you also learn a lot from the kids, and I thought that was a valuable lesson. I thought Fr. Mike Depick did an amazing job organizing the camp, recruiting counselors, and getting the campers excited for the week. Also I believe that he did a great job balancing classes [teaching the campers about God, Bishops, Cardinals, etc], prayer services, and activities. It allowed the campers to remain busy all day with exciting events and activities that

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A Pastoral Service for Persons who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing
Greetings members and friends,

We are excited to be back up and running with our Vision Magazine. We hope that you like our new format. We have many wonderful articles for you in this issue. On page 4 be sure to read all about our new Episcopal Moderator, Bishop Kevin Rhoades of Harrisburg, PA. Many of you had the opportunity to meet Bishop Rhoades at Pastoral Week 2009 in San Mateo, CA. As you surely realized, we have a gem of an advocate in Bishop Rhoades!

We also wanted to take this opportunity to go back and tell you about our 2008 Father David Walsh Pastoral Worker of the Year Award Recipient, Nancy Huber. Nancy is a wonderful individual who has worked tirelessly for the accessibility of services for the Catholic Deaf community as well as the advancement of Deaf Pastoral Workers.

Included in this issue is information on the upcoming webinar presented by NCPD and comments and registration information on the Religious ASL week at De Sales.

We hope you will enjoy this issue of Vision and we look forward to you submitting articles, pictures and announcements for future issues.

NCOD Board of Directors
Dear Friends in Christ,

As newly appointed episcopal representative to the National Catholic Office for the Deaf, I wish to extend to you my heartfelt thanks for the warm welcome you extended to me at Pastoral Week 2009 in San Mateo. I enjoyed the opportunity to meet so many pastoral workers devoted to the wonderful ministry with Deaf and Hard of Hearing persons. I feel privileged to support your ministry and to assist NCOD in having a close relationship with the Bishops of the United States.

I was also happy to participate in the meetings of the Board of Directors of NCOD. The commitment and enthusiasm of the members of the Board give me much hope for the future of NCOD.

I wish to express special thanks to Deacon Shawn Carey for his wonderful hospitality during Pastoral Week. He gave me a fine tour of Saint Patrick Seminary. I also appreciated the opportunity to learn a lot about pastoral ministry with the Deaf from Deacon Shawn and from many others I spoke with during the week. You helped me to understand not only the challenges, but also the hopes, for Catholic Deaf Ministry in our country.

Let us pray for Deacon Shawn as he prepares for ordination to the priesthood this spring. May other Deaf youth also respond generously to the Lord’s call to the priesthood and the consecrated life!

Please know that you are remembered in my prayers. May Christ reign in your hearts and may He bless you with His abundant grace and peace!

Sincerely yours in Christ,

+Kevin C. Rhoades
Bishop of Harrisburg
Meet Bishop Kevin Rhoades

Bishop Rhoades is the son of Charles and the late Mary Rhoades and the brother of Charles Rhoades and Robin McCracken. He was born November 26, 1957, in Mahanoy City, Pennsylvania, located in Schuylkill County in the Diocese of Allentown, and baptized at Saint Canicus Church there. He grew up in Lebanon, where he was a member of Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary Parish. He attended the former Saint Mary’s School in Lebanon and graduated from Lebanon Catholic High School in 1975.

He enrolled at Mount Saint Mary’s College (now University) in Emmitsburg, Maryland, in the fall of 1975, and studied there for two years. In 1977, he entered Saint Charles Borromeo Seminary in Overbrook, Pennsylvania, and earned a bachelors degree in philosophy there in 1979. He did his theological studies at the North American College and the Pontifical Gregorian University, both in Rome, from 1979-1983. He also studied Spanish at the University of Salamanca in Spain during the summer of 1982.

Cardinal Terence Cooke ordained Bishop Rhoades a deacon at Saint Peter’s Basilica in Vatican City in 1982. He was ordained a priest of the Harrisburg Diocese on July 9, 1983, by then-Auxiliary Bishop William Keeler. The ceremony took place at Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary Church in Lebanon, and was the first ordination to take place in the county.

His first assignment in the diocese was as parochial vicar at Saint Patrick Parish in York from 1983-1985. During this time, he also ministered in the Spanish-speaking apostolates at Cristo Salvador Parish in York and Cristo Rey Mission in Bendersville. In 1985, he returned to the Gregorian University in Rome, where he earned advanced degrees in dogmatic theology and canon law.

In 1988, he came back to the Harrisburg Diocese to serve as assistant chancellor under then-Bishop Keeler. During this time, he also ministered as the director of the Spanish apostolate in Dauphin, Cumberland and Perry counties, and as administrator pro-tem of Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish in Lebanon.

Bishop Rhoades was appointed pastor of Saint Francis of Assisi Parish, Harrisburg, in 1990. He served there until 1995, when he accepted a full-time faculty position with Mount Saint Mary’s Seminary. While there, he taught courses in systematic theology, canon law, and Hispanic ministry.

In March 1997, he was named rector of Mount Saint Mary’s Seminary, a role he fulfilled until his appointment by Pope John Paul II as Bishop of the Diocese of Harrisburg on October 14, 2004.

He was ordained a Bishop on December 9, 2004, by Cardinal Justin Rigali, Archbishop of Philadelphia. On that date, he began his ministry as Bishop of Harrisburg, a diocese which encompasses 15 counties of south-central Pennsylvania and which includes over 250,000 Catholics.

Bishop Rhoades serves as President of the Pennsylvania Catholic Conference, as Co-chair of the Pennsylvania Conference on Interchurch Cooperation, Chair of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops Task Force on Health Care, and as Episcopal Moderator of the National Catholic Office for the Deaf. He is a member of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs, the United States Conference of Bishops Subcommittee on the Catechism, the Board of Trustees of the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception, the Board of Trustees of Mount Saint Mary’s University, the Board of Trustees of Saint Charles Seminary, the Board of Regents of Saint Vincent Seminary, the Episcopal Advisory Board of the Theology of the Body Institute, the Episcopal Cabinet for Catholic Charities USA., and the Bishops’ Advisory Council of The Institute for Priestly Formation.
By Dr. Nancy Thompson, NCPD Director of Programs & Diocesan Relations

You are Invited to a Live-Captioned Webinar Series

Sponsored by the National Catholic Partnership on Disability and Organizational Partners

The National Catholic Partnership on Disability (NCPD) in consultation with the National Catholic Office for the Deaf (NCOD) cordially invites you to participate in live captioned webinars. For a second year NCPD joins with partners and collaborators to bring to you internet seminars on topics selected to support your pastoral, liturgical and catechetical ministries. Live question and answer periods with the experts will be featured on each topic. These webinars are available live and/or for your use as ministry tools at a later time in archived or DVD versions. Handouts and resources on the topics specified are provided for your use as well, and will be available on the NCPD website at www.ncpd.org and on the DVD that will be released at the end of the season.

Participants in catechetical, pastoral, family, youth, adult, and social/counseling ministries will find this series very helpful to their parish or diocesan ministry. Volume and type size can be adjusted for those with visual impairment. Live captioning is always provided for Deaf participants. Transcripts and Power Points are available on the NCPD website for download and use by you following the webinar.

July 15, 2009, Wednesday, 1:00-2:00 p.m. EDT
“Access in Liturgy: Making Liturgical Ministries More Accessible to People with Disabilities”

Questions about access to liturgy and liturgical ministries for people with disabilities were two of the most highly requested topics for this season’s webinars. Experts will explore how we can expand our welcome to “full, conscious and active participation” in all aspects of the liturgy, including ministries.

Presenters are Patrick Gorman, DMA, from the Office of Worship, Diocese of Madison, WI, and Karen Murray, NCPD Board of Directors and Director of the Office for Persons with Disabilities, Archdiocese of Boston, MA. They bring years of personal and professional experience to the questions explored. Serving as Moderator will be Lisa Tarker, Executive Director for the Federation of Diocesan Liturgical Commissions, Washington, DC.
Building New Community in an Old Church

We Catholics say the Mass is the “centerpiece” of our faith. This one hour liturgy eloquently expresses all the truths about life and death and God and humanity and history and eternity that we hold dear, while giving us a special time and place to come together regularly with fellow believers to prayer and worship. Since September 2008, here in the Archdiocese of Newark, the Mass is also the centerpiece of our Deaf Ministry. Deaf Catholics come with their praise and thanks. They come with their problems and questions. Many are recent immigrants seeking a “place to belong” after a long journey to America. They come with cupcakes and kindness and stories of the old St. John’s of 30 years ago, where they first learned about their faith or were married by then Father John Hourihan. They come early and stay late. They come by bus and car and on foot. Some enter through the side garden in wheelchairs. Some climb the steep stone stairs in front of St. John’s, the oldest Catholic parish in New Jersey (built in 1856).

But, no matter how they come or why they come, Deaf Catholics come to St. John’s in downtown Newark on Sundays in ever-growing numbers. Why? Because they know they are “home” there. They don’t have to make special arrangement in advance to have an interpreter help them understand and participate in Mass. They don’t have to sit in a special section off to the side, or politely acknowledge all the well-meaning Hearing people who nod and smile, yet hesitate to approach or connect in a more meaningful way. This is the crucial differences between an Interpreted Mass and a Signed Mass. This is their church, a Deaf Church. Instead of accommodating their so-called “inability to communicate” in an English text-based environment, the tables are turned. Non-signing family and friends’ inability to communicate in ASL is accommodated by voice interpreters. Instead of trying to fit in, Deaf Catholics can relax, and connect with God and each other in a natural, visually-oriented environment. They get on with the important activities of their faith: learning, service, spiritual growth - without having to struggle to be included or understood.

As with Social Services, people gravitate to community-based organizations and facilities in which they feel respected and accepted for who they truly are. We’ve offered “faith-based” services to the community for many years before the government decided to label them. The best our Church can offer to those who are left on the margins of society is available at both the local Catholic Charities Office and at St. John’s Church. Hundreds of needy folks still line up every day at St. John’s for free food and healthcare, programs long-ago established by its visionary pastor and advocate for the Deaf, Monsignor John Hourihan. And Deaf Catholics flock to ASL Mass every Sunday. People know they can come as they are – complicated, unique, “only human”, and seeking answers to life’s big questions and assistance with some of life’s big challenges, not ashamed of any weaknesses or doubts. No one is judged. And no one is ignored. No one is patronized. Every problem isn’t solved. But every heart is open, and every idea or concern is given a chance for expression in a safe, affirming environment.

One might say that every parish has its own “personality”. Some are showy, big on ritual, décor, fancy statues and large choirs. Other are humble, priding themselves more on community services than on elaborate flower arrangements. Although St. John’s is an historic landmark and located near our grand new entertainment and cultural showcase, the New Jersey Performing Arts Center, its humble personality fits perfectly the mission of basic Christian charity. Everyday, poor and homeless folks line up for free meals by the hundreds. Business, schools and church bring donations of clothing, food and furniture to St. John’s for those in need.

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fulfilling St. Paul’s words to the Corinthians, “that our abundance may be a supply for their want.” And now Deaf Catholics gather weekly in our new home.

“If walls could talk” (or “sign” in our case), St. John’s would tell of immigrants landing in a strange new place and starting over with only faith in their hearts and a few dollars in their pockets. In fact, the name “Newark” is from the first Christians settlers who found on the beautiful highlands of the lower Passaic River a new Ark of Hope, after many long years of struggle and religious oppression in their countries of origin. The high colorful windows of St. John’s would tell of all the faithful Catholics who’ve gathered and worshipped and worked for the glory of God within these walls for almost two centuries. They would remind us of Monsignor John Hourihan’s dream, a vision of a church that truly serves the poor and the vulnerable and the Deaf. Rather than worrying about power and control, his dreams was for a church that did the real work of the humble Carpenter from Nazareth, ministering with those who literally had no where else to turn. Every penny that was donated to the parish during his 40-year tenure was spent on direct services or provision of goods for this target population. And no one was asked if they were Catholics or if they could pay, or why they were so needy. Unconditional Love. Absolute Charity. The true mission of our wonderful Catholic Church.

The Catholic Deaf Community is proud to be part of this tradition once again, with the help of Father Bismarck Chau, our new signing priest, me, Deacon Tom Smith and all the faithful lectors, ushers and gift bearers who make our Sunday liturgies so meaningful. These same hallowed historic walls now silently witness the rebirth of Father John’s dream for Deaf Catholics every Sunday as we gather for Eucharist and fellowship. For many years there were no priests able to minister competently with the Deaf and Hard-of-hearing among the Body of Christ here in Newark. The few chaplains assigned in years past knew “some signs” but were lost when it came to meaningful conversation or the practical provision of effective pastoral ministry. Third parties like interpreters had to suffice. But, not any more. We are one family with one faith and one language in which to express it. When we leave church, now we can say “See you next week”, and know confidently that these old doors will be open again next Sunday to welcome new and old congregants again, same place/same time, come rain or come shine. Yes… our “roots” are taking hold again at St. John’s and “tree” of Deaf Catholicism is growing strong again in the New Ark of Hope.  

Deacon Tom Smith

Board Elections

NCOD congratulations go out to Pat Richey of Olathe, KS, newly elected member of the Board of Directors. She will represent the Midwest Region. Pat works as a consultant for the Office of Deaf Ministry for the Archdiocese of Kansas City. She has served on the Archdiocesan Task Force for the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) Marriage Initiative, the Archdiocese Board of Directors for Deaf Ministry and the Archdiocese Deaf Advisory Board. Pat brings to the board experience in ministry formation, administration, theology, finance and religious education. Pat is also a recent graduate of the Master Program in Pastoral Ministries with the Deaf at St. Thomas University in Miami. Welcome aboard Pat!

We also want to send out a thank you and congratulations to Fr. Thom Duston, Northeast Region and Deb Garner, Southeast Atlantic Region. Both are present members of the Board of Directors and have agreed to serve for a second term.

Thank you Fr. Thom and Deb!
NANCY HUBER has dedicated her life to ministry with deaf children AND THEIR FAMILIES! I emphasize FAMILIES because Nancy always wanted the child to consider the Church as his/her family. Beginning in the 1960’s, Nancy fully entered into ministry with deaf people, even when no one in the "official Church" knew what to do with an enthusiastic, committed lay person who talked about her "vocation" as a lay person! In the late 1960’s in Chicago when there was no recognized ministry with deaf people, Nancy kept the deaf community connected to the larger Church. She taught for a number of years at Holy Trinity School for the Deaf. Then, beginning in 1979, she began work as the Director of Religious Education for Deaf Children in the Archdiocese of Chicago, a position she held till June of 2008. What made Nancy so good at this job was that she was a natural teacher. She loved to teach children about God, and so she approached everything she did in that manner, Nancy did everything she could to welcome new families. Half of our families with deaf children are Latino. Nancy always made sure they had equal access to everything we did. When she recruited and trained catechists, one of her many specialties, she passed on to them how to teach children in an effective way. Yet, Nancy’s greatest teaching tool was her faith.

Beyond all her skills and credentials, Nancy believes, and hungers to communicate that belief to as many children and families as she can. The Catholic Faith in all its richness of Tradition, Sacrament, worship, prayer, and commitment to the poor has always inspired Nancy. What is her lasting legacy here in Chicago is a wonderful, effective religious education program; a cadre of well-trained and enthusiastic catechists; an Archdiocesan awareness that deaf children and deaf families have a right to access religious education opportunities. Yet, for all of that, what remains with all of us who have known her is the example of her unconditional love for the Lord, and all of us privileged to have known her.

**Fr. Joe Mulcrone**
Pastoral Week 2009      San Mateo, CA

Top Left: Chapel at St. Patrick Seminary
Top Right: Entrance to St. Patrick Seminary
Bottom Left: Golden Gate Bridge
Bottom Right: Monique Mouton, official NCOD photographer

Top Left: Board members working together
Top Right: Enjoying group lunch
Bottom Left: Post Conference
Bottom Right: Banquet Entertainment
Are you looking for a new challenge to your signing skills in combination with understanding the Mass and the Scripture readings? If so, you may want to join us at RASL Week 2009 at De Sales Center in Brooklyn, Michigan.

What is RASL? Religious ASL is a week of intense learning, fun-filled spiritual growth, and taking your ability of understanding both ASL and Scripture to a new level. If you are a priest or deacon working in Deaf ministry, an interpreter for the Liturgy, or a Deaf Lector for Sunday Mass, this is an opportunity to develop new skills and grow spiritually.

RASL participants will:
- Expand your religious sign vocabulary
- Learn techniques to assist in changing abstract terms into ASL
- Develop an enhanced understanding of the translation and interpreting process required to achieve a theologically sound interpretation of the Mass.
- Analyze Scripture and the prayers of the Catholic Mass including the Creed, Our Father, and the Eucharistic Prayer to better understand them. This will lead to a clearer ASL translation during the Liturgy.

Explore the History of the Mass, General Instruction of the Roman Missal (GIRM), and the Sacraments to broaden your knowledge in this area. RASL 09 instructors are Monsignor Glenn Nelson, Fr. Michael Depêk, OSFS, Deacon Patrick Graybill, Deacon Dave Sommers, Sue Gudenkauf, CI/CT and Kid Fedio, MA. The program is directed by Rose Smith.

Below are excerpts from attendees at RASL 2008:

--I am a Deaf person and want to tell about RASL Week 2008. We learned that even though we are fluent in ASL we still need to practice for Catholic Mass, Bible Study classes, and other liturgical events. It's very important for Deaf people to really understand what is being said, not just pretend they know what the Readings mean. More people need to attend RASL Week to learn how to translate into ASL the proper way. Just signing the words is not good enough. Also, it helps to practice the Readings with the ASL interpreter.

Holley Family Village at DeSales Center is a marvelous place to stay with new buildings, no mosquitoes, air conditioning, boats, swimming and a campfire. I even spent some free time painting note cards that are for sale to benefit RASL Week (see email address below). We had a marvelous experience and I encourage you to attend! From Patricia "Patti" Flannery-Slisz

--I learned a lot, not only what to interpret but how to proclaim the Gospel, the Scriptures and the Mass in a way that is accessible and beautiful while using ASL. The incredible RASL faculty go a long way toward helping participants learn and grow so much in just five days! Two really important things I

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learned were that I need to lean on my ASL mentors whenever possible, and preparation is the key to clear, understandable interpreting. I would encourage anyone involved in Deaf Ministry to attend RASL. The growth in your spiritual life will astound you.

From Angela Grzemkowski

One highlight for me was spending the week with a priest (and several deacons) who are Deaf. It was an enriching and powerful experience seeing daily Mass and prayers services signed in ASL. Each day actually learning/discussing how to convey the message of that day’s Mass in ASL was very helpful. A bonus was sharing experiences with people from around the country. I would encourage anyone who celebrates, interprets or signs the Readings for the Deaf Community to attend RASL. You won't be disappointed!

From Susan Brosmith

Religious ASL Week is part of the Holley Family Village Summer Programs. For more information on other programs or about the De Sales Center go to: www.desales.org. For information or registration forms for the upcoming RASL 2009 please contact Rose Smith at: smithroj@gmail.com or call 989-587-6950.

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everyone to be motivated and participate. The year before that, summer of 2007, I attended the DeSales center as a camper where I met deaf Catholics from other countries; I am always satisfied when attending the DeSales center. I encourage anyone and everyone to attend camps at the DeSales center. Deaf Catholic Youth Week might be coming again to the DeSales Center next summer (2010) and I strongly encourage everyone to consider it and come, I will most likely attend again as a counselor and I would love to see more young motivated kids attend.

Eric Griswold

Save the Date!
Pastoral Week 2010   Houston, TX
January 15-19
“Call of the Spirit”
### NCOD Mission Statement:
“Spread God’s message through the support of Deaf and Hard of Hearing Pastoral Ministry so that we may all be one in Christ”