

October 2009 Parish Advocate E News Update

Dear Parish Advocates,

October is

Respect Life Month
Celiac Sprue Awareness Month
Healthy Lung Week
National Breast Cancer Awareness Month
National Campaign for Healthier Babies Month
National Liver Awareness Month
National Lupus Awareness Month
National Spina Bifida Prevention Month
Sudden Infant Death Syndrome Month
National AIDS Awareness Month
World Mental Health Day

Prayers of the Faithful . . .

That every human conscience awakens a profound reverence for human life and that we are granted grace to defend our smallest and most defenseless brothers and sisters, those still being formed in their mother's womb, we pray. . .

That babies be given the necessary supports and opportunities for growth and development, we pray . . .

That our parish communities continue Jesus' mission of love for people with disabilities by offering appropriate support and accommodations, we pray . . .

NCPD WEBINAR SERIES 2009-2010 **Internet Seminars to Support your** **Ministry Needs**

Registration Open for Upcoming Webinars: To access these webinars, you must have high speed internet service. Registration for any of the webinars is free for parishioners of the Diocese of Richmond since we are affiliate members of the National Catholic Partnership on Disabilities (NCPD). To register for a webinar go to www.NCPD.org.

The webinars will also be shown at the Pastoral Center. To attend, call or email Rosie Flax at 804 622-5126 or rflax@richmonddiocese.org.

Catholic schools more perfectly reflect the single flock envisioned by Jesus, our Shepherd, when they welcome and integrate students with disabilities into the total life of the school. In this NCPD webinar, "**Access in Catholic Education, Part I: Elementary Schools**" on Tuesday, October 13, 2009, from 3-4:00 p.m. EDT (and "Access in Catholic Education, Part II: High Schools" on February 16, 2010), Catholic educators with significant experience at both the school and diocesan levels will share strategies and resources that enable Catholic schools to become successful, inclusive communities.

Meet with **Sally Todd**, Associate Superintendent, Diocese of Orange Catholic Schools; **Eileen Grams**, Inclusion Specialist, Our Lady of Mercy Catholic Elementary School; and **Marie Powell**, Executive Director, USCCB Secretariat of Catholic Education, to explore this topic at the elementary Catholic school level. [Click here for a flyer](#)

Tuesday, October 20, 2009, 1:00-2:30 p.m. EDT NCPD Webinar

The affects of suicide on parishioners and their family members from children and youth to the elderly are immeasurable. Pastoral and youth ministers, catechetical and family life ministers, family members—all involved— want to be aware of how to respond and to gain tools in addressing suicide. Join us on Tuesday, October 20, 2009, from 1-2:30 p.m. EDT for "**Access to Tools in Addressing Suicide**," an important internet seminar with noted speaker, columnist and author, **Fr. Ron Rolheiser, OMI**; Board Chair, Suicide Bereavement Support (SBS) and Archdiocesan Religious Education Coordinator, **Claire Woodruff**; and **Dr. Thomas Welch**, Member, NCPD Council on Mental Illness and Adult/Forensic Psychiatrist. [Click here for a flyer.](#)

Go to www.ronrolheiser.com and click on Writings on Suicide and browse through many of Fr. Rolheiser's thoughts and reflections on this topic, in preparation for this upcoming webinar.

For review of the past webinars, go to www.NCPD.org and click on webinars, then click on the topics of the webinars you would like to view.

October: Respect Life Month

Bishop Murphy Addresses Health Care Reform

Bishop William Murphy, chairman of Domestic Justice and Human Development for the U.S. bishops, addresses the urgent need for health care reform that is available to everyone and protects the life and dignity of every person. [Bishop Murphy on YouTube.](#)

***Respect Life Month Statement by Cardinal Justin Rigali**

"Catholics across the United States will again celebrate Respect Life Month throughout October. Catholic parishes and organizations will sponsor hundreds of educational conferences, prayer services, and opportunities for public witness, as well as events to raise funds for programs assisting those in need. Such initiatives are integral to the Church's ongoing effort to help build a culture in which every human life *without exception* is respected and defended.

Education and advocacy during Respect Life Month address a broad range of moral and public policy issues. Among these, the care of persons with disabilities and those nearing the end of life is an enduring concern. Some medical ethicists wrongly promote ending the lives of patients with serious physical and mental disabilities by withdrawing their food and water, even though - or in some cases precisely because - they are *not* imminently dying..."

Cardinal Rigali speaks also about several important, current ethical issues that challenge us today and the Church teaching on these points: stem cell research, abortion, and the Freedom of Choice Act (FOCA). For the full text of Cardinal Rigali's Statement, made for Respect Life Sunday, Oct. 4, go to <http://www.usccb.org/comm/archives/2009/09-189.shtml>. or see all of the USCCB's Respect Life Program materials by [clicking here](#).

October 4-10, 2009 is Mental Illness Awareness Week

**Keeping the Momentum:
Mental Illness Awareness Week 2009
Building Community, Taking Action Oct. 4-10;
Day of Prayer Oct. 6**

In 1990, the U.S. Congress established the first week of October as Mental Illness Awareness Week (MIAW). Since then, advocates for people with mental illness have organized a great variety of events to educate communities about mental illness. The NCPD Council on Mental Illness is pleased to release its newly developed resource manual, *Welcomed and Valued: Building Faith Communities of Support and Hope with People with Mental Illness and Their Families* to assist parishes in planning activities to commemorate Mental Health Awareness Month, Mental Illness Awareness Week and the Day of Prayer. The manual is available for free download on the NCPD website. [Click here](#) to download. Print copies can be purchased by [clicking here](#).

In addition, the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) has developed a host of resources to support local, state and national activities. These can be found on their website at www.nami.org. For more information on the Oct. 6 Day of Prayer visit www.nami.org/faithnet.

The NCPD Council on Mental Illness accomplished several goals in recent months that are culminating in October.

- In July, 2009 the NCPD Council on Mental Illness launched a Nationwide Initiative to train Catholic Clergy, Parish staff, and others in meeting the spiritual and pastoral needs of persons with mental illness.
- The pastoral resource manual, *Welcomed and Valued: Building Faith Communities of Support and Hope with People with Mental Illness and Their Families* has been published and is available in hard copy, CD and downloadable pdf. [Click here](#) to download. [Click here](#) to purchase printed version.
- The 27 minute open-captioned video, *Welcomed and Valued: Supporting People with Mental Illness in Parish Life* was premiered in July. It is available for purchase by [clicking here](#).
- Over 100 participants attended and each received a copy of both the DVD and the pastoral manual with accompanying CD. Three *Welcomed and Valued* awareness workshops were piloted in Washington, DC (7/11/09); Chicago, IL (7/21/09); and Portland, OR (7/24/09). Over 150 participants attended.
- An in-depth 3-day training at the Shrine of Our Lady of Snows in Belleville, IL on September 26-28 was held to train people from dioceses throughout the country to provide parish awareness training based on the components developed by the NCPD

- Council on Mental Illness. Twenty people participated in this training.
- Participants of the three-day training wrote Action Plans committing to a variety of steps to raise awareness and provide support in their locales. They also enthusiastically signed on as founding members of the National Catholic Network on Mental Illness, launched during the conference to facilitate communication, support and the sharing of experience, resources and ministry models.
 - Pathways Summit: Immediately following the three-day training, NCPD's director and several Council members and training participants joined over 150 others from throughout the U.S. and Canada at a national Interfaith Summit sponsored by Pathways to Promise. The Summit provided the opportunity to announce the launch of the National Catholic Network on Mental Illness, to share ideas with leaders of other faiths working to build supportive communities of faith and to fight the stigma of mental illness.

Upcoming Events:

October 30, 2009,- 6 pm – 8 pm Disability Awareness Giftedness Gathering Event with Bishop DiLorenzo Presentation by National Catholic Partnership on Disabilities, Pastoral Center, 7800 Carousel Lane, Richmond, VA 23294.

March 6, 2010: Time to be announced – Parish Advocate Training Pastoral Center, 7800 Carousel Lane, Richmond, VA 23294

Program Meetings:

Outreach In Love, a Catholic based religious education program designed for the intellectually and/or physically disabled meets, on Wednesday evenings and Sunday mornings at St. Edward the Confessor, Richmond. **This year's program will start with Mass celebrated by Bishop DiLorenzo on Sunday, October 11, 2009, 1 pm at St. Edward the Confessor, Richmond.** It is open to all faiths and all ages. For more information call Joan Congable at 804 501-0022 or email at outreachinlove@yahoo.com. See Parish Advocate section on a new **Respite in Love Program**.

Living in Holland Support Group for families with children with disabilities meets the second Thursday of each month at 7 p.m. at Blessed Sacrament, Norfolk. All families, regardless of their church affiliation, who have children with disabilities, are invited. For more information on this, please contact Karen Jackson at DaCapomusic@cox.net or 757 423-4027.

Young Life Capernaum, a program for young people with intellectual and physical disabilities meets the first 3 Mondays of the month at Holy Family Church in Virginia Beach. In addition, on **October 8th, Holy Family is having a Capernaum Celebration.** For more information, contact Sue Stefonowich via email - parishadvocate@gmail.com.

Parish Advocates:

We are in the process of completing a Directory of all the Parish Advocates to be distributed at the next Parish Advocate Network Meeting. The directory will have your name and the name and location of your parish. If you have not submitted your bio, please write a short paragraph about your background and interests in regards to disabilities. Also please mention your accomplishments in regards to welcoming, helping, including, and bringing the faith to people with disabilities. Don't be modest! Please send it to Nita Grignol, mail it to Nita at 7800 Carousel Lane, Richmond, Va 23294 or fax it to 804 358-9159 or send it by e-mail to ngrignol@richmonddiocese.org

Congratulations and thank you Parish Advocates and Commission Members for your accomplishments!

Joan Congable, Parish Advocate, St. Edward the Confessor, Richmond, has started a **Respite in Love** program. The purpose of the program is to give parents of disabled children, who live at home, a little time for themselves, a chance to focus on their life alone or together. The program will have planned activities and will be held in the gym at St. Edward's School. The respite care will be held on the 2nd Saturday of each month beginning November 14th and ending on June 12th, 2010. For more information contact Joan Congable 804 501-0022 home, 804 387-1756 cell or outreachinlove@yahoo.com.

Marilyn Maietta, Parish Advocate, St. Joseph's, Martinsville has started a transportation ministry. In addition, she continues her greeting card ministry.

Karen Jackson, Parish Advocate, Blessed Sacrament, Norfolk for all her work in educating fellow parishioners about autism. See the Wall Street Journal article, *Making God More Accessible* which mentions her pastor, Father Joe Metzgar and her daughter. [Click here](#) to view the article.

Legislation/Advocacy Issues

Free H1N1 Flu Resources for your ministry: Concerns by credible sources about the possible impact of the H1N1 Flu necessitates our care and attention, as people who convene children and youth, one of the most vulnerable populations of this virus. Your diocese or parish has information that you will want to be aware of and follow. There are simple, common sense remedies that can be applied such as hand washing and asking catechists and children to stay home if they are not feeling well, especially if they have a fever. Below are some links from the U.S. Government where you will find helpful and free resources to support your awareness.

H1N1 Flu: A Guide for Community and Faith-based Organizations (30 pages, free download)

<http://www.flu.gov/professional/community/cfboguidance.html>.

You can check this link: [widespread influenza activity](#) to see if your location is affected. Other free print resources from the U.S. Government can be downloaded at

<http://www.cdc.gov/flu/freeresources/print.htm>.

Virginia



October Is Virginia Disability History and Awareness Month

The **2009 Virginia General Assembly passed Senate Joint Resolution 321** designating October as Disability History and Awareness Month in Virginia. This action was prompted by a group of young Virginians with disabilities who are alumni of the **Youth Leadership Forum (YLF)**, an initiative to develop leadership skills among youth with disabilities, sponsored by the **Virginia Board for People with Disabilities**.

In June, a group of youth with disabilities who had participated in the YLF or other leadership initiatives, along with parents and teachers, met with staff from the VDOE, the Virginia Board for People with Disabilities, and the **Partnership for People with Disabilities** to develop a bank of resources so that all schools could readily find information, activities, and materials to promote and highlight Disability History and Awareness Month in Virginia. Increasing public knowledge, awareness and understanding of disabilities will help to ensure full participation of students with disabilities into the life of their schools.

Educators and others are encouraged to use these **resources**, available online at <http://www.vcu.edu/partnership/C-SAL/disabilityawareness.htm> If you have any **questions** or need additional information, please contact:

- Marianne Moore, VDOE Transition Specialist at Marianne.Moore@doe.virginia.gov or (804) 225- 2700
- Dana Yarborough , Director, Center for Self-Advocacy Leadership at Virginia Commonwealth University at dvyarbrough@vcu.edu or (804) 828-0352
- Teri Barker- Morgan, Sponsored Programs Manager, The Virginia Board for People with Disabilities at Teri.Barker@vbpd.virginia.gov or (804) 786-9381

Resources

Our Sunday Visitor (OSV) has free resources on the internet that you might find helpful, with or without adaptation. Visit [Teaching Catholic Kids](#) for free downloads, support and information for parents, teachers, catechists and anyone who wants to help kids gain a sense of their Catholic identity.

Body & Soul: Diana & Kathy, a documentary about two remarkable advocates for people with disabilities, will have its television premiere on public television this October and November across the country. It is directed by Academy Award nominee Alice Elliott. Click here for [screening and broadcast dates](#).

Adaptive Clothing If you would like to pass on information to a friend (male or female) who uses a wheelchair and prefers clothing designed to accommodate special needs that they might have, check out this link <http://www.izzycamilleri.com> and go to IZ ADAPTIVE CLOTHING. The men's line will be available at the end of October.

FYI

National Catholic Partnership on Disabilities (NCPD) Partner News:

In Harrisburg in June, Father Michael Depcik, an Oblate of St. Francis de Sales who is himself deaf and ministers to deaf Catholics in the Archdiocese of Chicago, celebrated Mass for the deaf and hearing communities at St. Patrick Cathedral.



The special Mass further inspired Father Rozman to continue his own efforts to communicate better with Catholics who are deaf. He said he learned 96 percent of Catholics who are deaf have never been to Mass -- a statistic that both saddened him and encouraged him to create change."

Click here to read the entire

story: [Catholic News Service story](#).

(Fr. Mike signs Mass and Fr. Thomas gives verbal interpretation.)
(Photo taken and provided by Emily Albert, Catholic Witness, Diocese of Harrisburg. Permission for NCPD to use in the E-News, granted)

Fr. Depcik has become a well known minister, advocate and presenter as he serves in the Archdiocese of Chicago and well beyond. Fr. Mike hosts a website called Fr. Mike's Kitchen Table Website, www.frmd.org, that provides resources in American Sign Language (ASL). Go to [YouTube - About Fr. MD's Website](#) where Fr. Mike tells about his background and the purpose of his website. His website is unusual in

that all of the "articles" are presented in sign language. He provides links to other sites, homilies for Sunday Masses, interviews, religious instruction, inspiration, Q & A, and much more...all in ASL.

In a June 27, 2009 article from the Harrisburg Patriot News, a description of Fr. Mike in action, leading a sign-language retreat in Harrisburg for people who are deaf, is related. The young, 39 year old priest, is described as being one of only 6 deaf priests in the U.S. The mass announced in the article became a powerful inspiration for Fr. Thomas Rozman the day he attended. Read more about that day by clicking [Deaf Priest Leads Sign Language Retreat](#).

Other:

Assisi House which will be located on the property of the Church of the Ascension, Virginia Beach is in the planning stages. For information on this go to **www.assisihouse.org**. Assisi House will be a group home for 8 individuals with intellectual/developmental disabilities who need 24/7 supervised care.

To learn more about Assisi House, click here
http://www.richmonddiocese.org/disabilities/documents/Assisi_House.pdf

A **L'Arche** home is in the formation stages for the Richmond/Glen Allen area. If you would like to be on their email list for information, please contact, Marybeth Meacham 804 273-9533/marybethmeacham@me.com, Cheryl Emory 804 747-4486/cherylemory@comcast.net. L'Arche communities are caring homes where persons with and without disabilities live with comfort, spirituality, and respect.

To learn more about the **L'Arche Home**, see the Catholic Virginian article
<http://www.catholicvirginian.org/archive/2008/2008vol84iss4/pages/article2.html>

Thank you for making a difference in the lives of people with disabilities.

Nita Grignol, Office for and with Persons with Disabilities
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www.richmonddiocese.org/disabilities/index.htm