

# DECEMBER PARISH MAILING

## People With Disabilities



Pope Francis Center  
for Justice and Charity

### Catholic Social Teaching

*“The principle of human dignity is an essential piece of our Catholic faith. The Church both defends the life of those who live with disability and welcomes them into the life of the Church.”*

—Kelsey Rea

### Homily Hints

“The Church continues to affirm the dignity of every human being, and to grow in knowledge and understanding of the gifts and

needs of her members who live with disabilities. Likewise, the Church recognizes that every parish community includes members with disabilities, and earnestly desires their active participation. All members of the

Body of Christ are uniquely called by God by virtue of their Baptism. In light of this call, the Church seeks to support all in their growth in holiness, and to encourage all in their vocations.” —*Revised Guidelines for the Celebration of the Sacraments with Persons with Disabilities* »

Nearly 1 in 5 people in the US has a disability. —*2012 US Census Report* »

We are invited to bring people who have disabilities into ministry with us. Like any parishioner, they have the right and deep desire to learn and grow in faith, but also to serve and minister to others. The welcome we extend to these individuals, just as Christ reaches out to each of us, speaks loudly.

“Each person is created in God’s image, yet there are variations in individual abilities. Positive recognition of these differences discourages discrimination and enhances the unity of the Body of Christ.” —*Welcome and Justice for Persons with Disabilities* »

“Defense of the right to life implies the defense of all other rights that enable the individual with the disability to achieve the fullest measure of personal development of which he or she is capable. These include the right to equal opportunity in education, in employment, in housing, and in health care, as well as the right to free access to public accommodations, facilities, and services.” —*Welcome and Justice for Persons with Disabilities* »

### Prayer Intentions

That families that include members with disabilities will find a welcoming home in the Catholic Church—

*we pray to the Lord.*

For parishes to find the resources they need to reach out to all their members, especially those with disabilities, new parents, older parishioners, busy families, and veterans and their families—

*we pray to the Lord.*



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For our parish family, that our community will model the welcoming and inclusive ministry of Jesus, seeking always to see the image of God in every person—

*we pray to the Lord.*

That growth in understanding of disabilities will lead to relationships of support and increase a sense of belonging for those who live with disabilities and their families—

*we pray to the Lord.*

That families and all who live with disabilities find their faith to be a source of strength, community, and hope—

*we pray to the Lord.*

### **Action**

**Accompany** Intentionally reach out to a family from your parish who has a member who has a disability.

**Advocate** Many public policies impact those who have disabilities. Make your voice known!

**Educate** Take the initiative to help educate your parish on issues surrounding disability awareness.

**Donate** Experiencing physical, developmental or mental challenges may be stressful. Recommend friends to take advantage of or donate to [Catholic Charities Counseling Services](#) »

### **Prayer**

Lord, let thy peace fill me up until I overflow; that where people cannot speak, I may be their advocate; that where anyone is rejected, I may extend my arms in welcome; that where parents are heavily burdened, I may offer a word of comfort; that where our children struggle, I may lift them up and cheer; that where some see disability, I may reveal to them extraordinary gifts; that where others judge, I may share with them my deep gladness; and that where any are overlooked, I may help the lights of all to shine.

O Giver of These Gifts, grant that I may not so much seek to be reassured as to reassure; to be praised, as to praise; to be accepted, as to accept; for it is in all our uncertainty that we are inspired to hope; it is in great challenges that we discover our greatest joys, and it is in our community of wanderers that we find the way home.

Amen.

—Tim Tucker

**December 3 is the International Day of Persons with Disabilities »**

