



## Vision Statement on Inclusion of People with Disabilities in Catechesis

Every person is a unique and precious gift who holds a sacred place in the family of God. By reason of their baptism, all Catholics are equal in dignity and share the same divine calling.<sup>1</sup> It is through our Baptism that we are incorporated into the Church, to be welcomed and included in parish life.

In the National Directory for Catechesis, the US Bishops remind us that all of God's children, including those with disabilities, share a universal desire to know and understand the mysteries of God and possess the ability to proclaim the Gospel. The inclusion of people with disabilities within the faith community enhances every aspect of Church life. "Persons with disabilities "are not just recipients of catechesis--they are also its agents."<sup>2</sup>

It is our responsibility as the Body of Christ to ensure that people with disabilities have every opportunity to experience faith in a meaningful and authentic way. This can only occur when we provide communities of accessibility, inclusion and engagement for both adults and children with disabilities. This inclusion must encompass the educational, sacramental, liturgical, and ministerial aspects of parish life.

The Archdiocese of Hartford is committed to its mission that every parishioner with disabilities experiences the fullest sense of belonging to their faith communities. Accommodations, adaptations, and support are to be offered to these individuals whenever and wherever necessary in order to meet their catechetical and sacramental needs. The Archdiocese of Hartford believes that all baptized people with disabilities "deserve the means to develop a relationship with God."<sup>3</sup>

We must respond pastorally to people with disabilities, as well as their families, to help them come to know the love that Jesus has for each of them. "We are a single flock under the care of a single shepherd. There can be no separate Church for persons with disabilities."<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Guidelines for the Celebration of the Sacraments for Persons with Disabilities, USCCB, 2017(1)

<sup>2</sup> National Directory for Catechesis, USCCB, 2005 (49)

<sup>3</sup> National Directory for Catechesis, USCCB, 2005 (49)

<sup>4</sup> Welcome and Justice for Persons with Disabilities, USCCB, 1999 (1)

