

**OPEN HEARTS • OPEN MINDS • OPEN DOORS**  
**CREATING ACCESS AND**  
**INCLUSION IN WORSHIP**



**2008 INCLUSION AWARENESS DAY WORKBOOK**  
**SEPTEMBER 28, 2008**

**PATHWAYS AWARENESS**  
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**[www.inclusioninworship.org](http://www.inclusioninworship.org)**

# Pathways Awareness

August 2008

Dear Religious Leader:

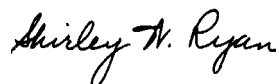
An integral part of the Open Hearts, Open Minds, Open Doors inclusion in worship movement is the annual celebration of **Inclusion Awareness Day**. We invite congregations to participate on the weekend of Sunday, **September 28, 2008**. Please take time to reflect on how your faith community intentionally includes people of all abilities in worship, ministry, fellowship and leadership roles.

Pathways Awareness has provided the Inclusion Awareness Day Workbook at [www.inclusioninworship.org](http://www.inclusioninworship.org) to assist with your participation. If your congregation is unable to participate on September 28th please set aside another weekend to reflect on your progress on this important issue.

We are delighted that the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Chicago, the Greek Orthodox Diocese of Chicago and the Episcopal Diocese of Chicago are joining in the celebration of Inclusion Awareness Day this year. We welcome the participation of other denominations.

Thank you for intentionally including worshippers of all abilities not only on Inclusion Awareness Day, but every day of the year.

Sincerely,



Shirley W. Ryan  
Chairman

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

|  |    |
|--|----|
| DEAR RELIGIOUS LEADER.....                           | 2  |
| COUNTDOWN TO INCLUSION AWARENESS DAY.....            | 4  |
| INTRODUCTION TO WORSHIP SERVICE .....                | 5  |
| OPENING PRAYER.....                                  | 5  |
| SCRIPTURE READINGS FOR ROMAN CATHOLIC PARISHES ..... | 5  |
| HOMILY HELPS FOR INCLUSION AWARENESS DAY .....       | 6  |
| PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL.....                         | 8  |
| COMMUNION REFLECTION .....                           | 9  |
| JUSTICE PRAYER .....                                 | 9  |
| CLOSING PRAYER.....                                  | 9  |
| INCLUSION AWARENESS DAY BULLETIN ITEMS.....          | 10 |
| BULLETIN COVER.....                                  | 10 |
| BULLETIN ARTICLE .....                               | 10 |
| SEVENWAYS TO OPEN THE DOORS .....                    | 11 |
| QUOTES FOR INCLUSION AWARENESS DAY.....              | 13 |
| PARISH WEBSITE POSTING FOR AWARENESS DAY.....        | 13 |

### **CREATING ACCESS AND INCLUSION IN WORSHIP**

On the cover:

Assistive listening device, Infant Jesus of Prague, Flossmoor

Ramp to the altar, Church of the Holy Spirit, Schaumburg

Automatic door opener, Infant Jesus of Prague, Flossmoor

Inclusion Awareness Day 2007, Our Lady of Perpetual Help, Glenview

*Photo courtesy of Our Lady of Perpetual Help*

## COUNTDOWN TO INCLUSION AWARENESS DAY

Begin planning now for Inclusion Awareness Day! Use the checklist below to get started. Underlined items available at [www.inclusioninworship.org](http://www.inclusioninworship.org).

- Mark your congregation's calendar for Inclusion Awareness Day, the last weekend in September, or choose an alternate date for your parish.
- Plan a special liturgy for Inclusion Awareness Day. Use this workbook and the workbooks on [www.inclusioninworship.org](http://www.inclusioninworship.org) for helpful materials.
- Recruit an inclusion committee to raise awareness to the need for access and inclusion. Introduce committee members to the congregation on Inclusion Awareness Day. Use tips on starting an inclusion committee at [www.inclusioninworship.org](http://www.inclusioninworship.org).
- Download the song "Open Doors" with sheet music from [www.inclusioninworship.org](http://www.inclusioninworship.org). Ask your choir to learn the hymn for Inclusion Awareness Day. Provide copies of the assembly version for congregants.
- Survey your congregation on Inclusion Awareness Day to find out the needs of your members. Use our access survey or facilities survey available at [www.inclusioninworship.org](http://www.inclusioninworship.org).
- Invite members of your congregation who happen to have disabilities to begin a ministry on Inclusion Awareness Day. Provide accommodations and continue their participation throughout the year.
- Invite members of your congregation who happen to have disabilities to speak on Inclusion Awareness Day about what inclusion means to them.

Pathways Awareness will announce the Open Hearts Awards on Inclusion Awareness Day to recognize outstanding congregational inclusion efforts with cash grants of up to \$1,000. Recipients have submitted completed nomination forms to Pathways Awareness to be eligible for an award. For more information visit [www.inclusioninworship.org](http://www.inclusioninworship.org).

## **INTRODUCTION TO WORSHIP SERVICE**

*(To be announced prior to worship service)*

In the gospel today we hear the story of the son who gave lip service, not action, to the request of his father. Today, on Inclusion Awareness Day, we ask each of you to personally take action to welcome and include parishioners of all abilities into our parish family every day of the year. (Mention your parish's plan to create access and inclusion and invite each parishioner to participate.)

## **OPENING PRAYER**

Loving and Gracious God, we gather together in the welcoming spirit of your love. As you have fashioned each one of us according to your image and embraced each of us with your generous love, may we in turn open our arms and hearts wide in welcome to each other. In our gathering today may we experience the joy and beauty of authentic fellowship where all are valued and all are accepted.

In this hour of worship, turn our hearts to you. Touch us with your Spirit and teach us your truth. Open our hearts to respond to your words and transform our lives into the likeness of Christ Jesus. Amen.

*Contributed by Old St. Patrick's Church, Chicago, IL*

## **SCRIPTURE READINGS FOR ROMAN CATHOLIC PARISHES**

**September 28, 2008**

**26<sup>TH</sup> SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME**

Ezekiel 18:25-28

Psalm 25:9-14

Philippians 2:1-11 or Philippians 2:1-5

Matthew 21:28-32

## **HOMILY HELPS FOR INCLUSION AWARENESS DAY**

**By Reverend Larry Gillick, S.J.**

### **STORY STARTER**

When I was eight years old, I was given the gift of blindness. In those early years it did not really feel like any kind of gift. I had to learn my neighborhood's holes, bumps and sidewalks. I had to learn my way around the house as well. Repetition of steps made things familiar.

In those days I could walk to Sunday Mass by myself, but getting around the church was very hard. I would get there early so as to find an empty pew. During Mass I would not always know whether people were standing kneeling or sitting. Going to the communion rail was difficult because I didn't know whether the people ahead of me had left after receiving. Then the really hard part was to try to find my way back to the right pew. Those were the early years before I learned cane travel. Blindness made me feel like there was something wrong with me and I felt everybody in church felt the same way about me. Being different was not a blessing for me nor for the Church.

How time does change things! Twenty-four years later I was ordained a Roman Catholic Jesuit priest and had my first Mass back in the St. Rose church of my youth. There were physical changes around the altar by then, but the pews, which once tortured my emotions, were filled with family and friends, all of whom had been such helps to get me to that altar on that June day. I had clear memories of a less welcoming church community and of the obstacles of pillars, steps and pew corners which were so frightening then. They were still there and I wondered how many people with physical challenges had faced those barriers and had turned away from the Church as a result.

***“When I was eight years old, I was given the gift of blindness.”***

*Father Larry Gillick, S.J.*

## **HOMILY HELPS FOR INCLUSION AWARENESS DAY**

**By Reverend Larry Gillick, S.J.**

### **REFLECTION ON THE SCRIPTURES**

In today's Gospel we hear of two contrary responses from the sons of a farming father. The little parable is about God's being the "Constant Inviter" and our "yes-again" "no-again" responses to His invitations.

When we say "Amen" to our reception of the Eucharist, that word flows easily from our lips. As with the son who said "yes", but did not go, we are tempted to say "yes" but take no action. We need to personally invite parishioners with disabilities to participate and to provide the accommodations needed to make their participation possible.

Parishioners with disabilities may be tempted themselves to say "no" to God's invitation to participate. They may feel too limited, too much of a bother, not good enough for taking their place in the Church. They need encouragement from the community to turn their "no" into "ability", their "disability" into "nobility". We who have physical or emotional challenges can be barriers to our own selves. We have to say "yes" to the truth of our limitations; that's our prayer-work. But we also have to recognize that we have gifts that we can share. The Church and the local communities have their work to do as well. They must remove physical barriers and overcome personal barriers of attitude and accept into our communities parishioners who, like Jesus, are different and yet a presence of Grace. Jesus was quite a different presentation of God's relationship with Israel. Most people could not respond to Him and His ways because they were uncomfortable with anyone unusual, as we are in our own times.

We all are invited to say "yes" and to live "yes" to the invitation to come forward and receive the Eucharist. Our "yes" is an affirmation that we receive the entire Body of Christ.



*Father Larry Gillick, S.J., is the Director of the Deglman Center for Ignatian Spirituality at Creighton University. In addition he offers spiritual direction to students, faculty and alumni of Creighton University and directs retreats and days of reflection around the country.*

## PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL

Belonging...fitting in...being invited... It is often so important to us...for ourselves...that we close the door or block the way for others...others just as eager as we are to be welcomed and invited. For a spirit of openness, hospitality, and welcome in all of our relationships.

We pray to the Lord...

How easy has it become for us to be accomplices of the popular culture? How often do we give our unwitting approval by simply standing back and accepting things the way they are – poverty, injustice, war, and violence? For the courage to step forward...working for equality, prosperity, and peace for all.

We pray to the Lord...

As we celebrate Inclusion Awareness Day in our church community, may we continue to build a home where the welcome of hospitality will always be true and honest ...because all are welcome...everyone's gift is respected...each unique ability is honored... and being church together...in the circle of our Creator's unconditional embrace...is our constant passion.

We pray to the Lord...

Whether first or last...stranger or neighbor...friend or enemy...we all stand at the gate, often so paralyzed by our fears, insecurities, and misgivings...that we cannot imagine a way into God's family. May we be calmed and strengthened by our faith in God's desire for us to live remarkable lives of belonging.

We pray to the Lord...

Prsider: Loving and merciful God, you care about each of us. Hear our prayers today that one day we all may be united with you. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

*Contributed by Old St. Patrick's Church, Chicago, IL*

## COMMUNION REFLECTION

Invite members of your congregation who happen to have disabilities to speak after communion about what inclusion means to them. Visit [www.inclusioninworship.org](http://www.inclusioninworship.org) and click on “Expert Congregations” to read a [communion reflection](#) by a parishioner from Church of the Holy Spirit, Schaumburg, IL.

## JUSTICE PRAYER

Forgive us, Lord, if we unwittingly share in the conditions  
or in a system that perpetuates injustice.  
Show us how we can serve your children  
and make your love practical by our works of compassion and service.  
*From “Justice Prayer” by Mother Teresa*  
*Contributed by Old St. Patrick’s Church, Chicago, IL*

## CLOSING PRAYER

O Lord, thank you for the blessings of the gifts and talents of each of our parishioners. Teach us to meet the challenges of developing an understanding and appreciation for who we are and how you intend for us to use our strengths in our Church and community. Help us to value one another’s differences.  
Amen.  
*Contributed by Old St. Patrick’s Church, Chicago, IL*

## CREATING ACCESS AND INCLUSION IN WORSHIP



*A well designed accessible ambo allows free space for the footplates on a wheelchair to clear the supporting structure.*

*Photo courtesy of Tortorelli Creations, Inc.  
[www.tortorelli.com](http://www.tortorelli.com)*

## INCLUSION AWARENESS DAY BULLETIN ITEMS

### BULLETIN COVER

Download the [Inclusion Awareness Day bulletin cover](#) at [www.inclusioninworship.org](http://www.inclusioninworship.org) on the “Inclusion Awareness Day” web page.

### BULLETIN ARTICLE

On \_\_\_\_\_ (insert date and parish) \_\_\_\_\_ will join other parishes in Chicago in observing Inclusion Awareness Day. Inclusion Awareness Day is part of the Pathways Awareness *Open Hearts, Open Minds, Open Doors* movement which raises awareness to the need for accommodations so that people of all abilities can participate in worship and ministries at their house of worship.

\_\_\_\_\_ (Insert name of parish) \_\_\_\_\_ especially welcomes parishioners of all abilities and seeks to enable full participation in the life of the church. By observing Inclusion Awareness Day we hope to further educate parishioners about the needs of people with disabilities in our midst, as well as to recognize the tremendous value that they add to our community.  
*Contributed by St. John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church, Des Plaines, IL*

## CREATING ACCESS AND INCLUSION IN WORSHIP



*A railing to the altar assists lectors and ministers of communion at St. Mary Star of the Sea parish in Chicago.*

*Photo courtesy of Our Lady Star of the Sea*

## SEVEN WAYS TO OPEN THE DOORS

“The creation of a fully accessible parish reaches beyond mere physical accommodations to encompass the attitudes of all parishioners toward persons with disabilities.”<sup>1</sup> Call forth the gifts of all in your community. Each person can follow these suggestions in some way, according to his or her gifts and capacities.

1. Initiate both a personal and parish examination of conscience.
  - What has your parish done to live the Beatitudes by becoming more accessible to those with physical, sensory, cognitive or psychological disabilities? How can you further this process? If you or a family member has a disability, you have a special opportunity to extend a generous offer of your experience in helping in that process. Be an advocate.
2. Survey other parishioners to identify which of the following would help them to participate fully in all aspects of parish life:
  - Transportation
  - Large print worship aids and/or bulletins or audio-taped bulletins
  - Assistive listening devices or American Sign Language (ASL) signing
  - Easily grasped door handles; appropriate door pressure
  - Handrails at steps
  - Wheelchair seating; elevator
  - Pastoral services for those unable to attend services
  - Accessible washrooms
3. Encourage commissions, committees and groups in your parish to evaluate the accessibility of all of your parish programs in order to welcome people of all abilities. Keep in mind that accessibility goes beyond physical access — it includes those who have sensory and cognitive disabilities.
4. Make your liturgies accessible. This might include ensuring physical access to your altar, ambo, and reconciliation room or confessionals; offering Braille and/or large print missalettes and hymnals; and offering ASL interpretation at mass and other sacramental celebrations. Lack of access for the sacraments of Reconciliation is

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<sup>1</sup> USCCB Guidelines for the Celebration of the Sacraments with Persons with Disabilities (Washington DC: USCCB, 1995), no.6.

particularly painful for those who use mobility aids or require ASL or assistive listening devices. The precious Blood should be made available at all times for those with severe sensitivity to gluten (Celiac – Sprue disease).

5. Search your local community for people who live in assistive living settings or nursing homes and offer companions and transportation for Mass and other parish gatherings. If you have a disability, make your parish aware that you need to attend liturgies and seasonal services.
6. Encourage your parish to offer accessible training sessions for anyone interested in becoming Eucharistic ministers, lectors, cantors or altar servers. By offering training sessions that create access for people with disabilities to participate in the liturgy, your parish can reflect the rich diversity of God's gift of life.
7. Welcome Catholics with disabilities who have stayed away because they have felt marginalized. The steps outlined above can extend a hand of welcome — as can helping fellow parishioners to educate themselves so that they can reach out to their brothers and sisters with disabilities and their families. Or if you or a family member have a disability and have felt disenfranchised, consider responding to initiatives that seek to bring Catholics with disabilities and their families home to the Church. When parishioners reach out they may be uncertain about how to welcome someone who has needs that they have never experienced themselves. Be generous and help them to learn. Give them time to grow. To risk it, even one more time, is well worth the effort.

From *Welcoming Parishioners with Disabilities*, by the National Catholic Partnership on Disability, [www.ncpd.org](http://www.ncpd.org). To order Pub. No. 5-606, call USCCB Publishing at 800-235-8722.

***“The creation of a fully accessible parish reaches beyond mere physical accommodations to encompass the attitudes of all parishioners toward persons with disabilities.”***

*Guidelines for the Celebration of Sacraments*

## QUOTES FOR INCLUSION AWARENESS DAY

“While we are called to make all people welcome every day, Inclusion Awareness Day reminds us of the gifts received when parishioners of all abilities are purposefully included in the day-to-day life and ministry of the Church.”  
- Francis Cardinal George, Archbishop of Chicago -

“More than 56 million people in the United States live with various disabilities, 14 million of whom are Catholic.”  
- National Catholic Partnership on Disability -

“The parish is the door to participation for persons with disabilities, and it is the responsibility of the pastor and lay leaders to make sure that this door is always open.”  
- US Bishop’s Pastoral Statement on Persons with Disabilities #18 -

## PARISH WEBSITE POSTING FOR AWARENESS DAY

*Open Hearts, Open Minds, Open Doors*  
Inclusion Awareness Day

On the weekend of **September 28, 2008** parishes throughout the Archdiocese of Chicago will celebrate the many ways we reach out to include parishioners of all abilities in worship, ministry, fellowship and religious education. Inclusion is offering the same respect and opportunity to participate to all people regardless of physical and mental abilities. Our parish is working hard to create an inclusive faith community where people of all abilities can participate. If you would like to participate in this ministry please call our parish Inclusion Representative, (insert name of Inclusion Rep) at (insert contact phone number).

Since 1996 the Open Hearts, Open Minds, Open Doors initiative has been a partnership between Pathways Awareness and the Archdiocese of Chicago. Visit [www.inclusioninworship.org](http://www.inclusioninworship.org) for more information.

# Pathways Awareness

The Inclusion Awareness Day Workbook is a publication of Pathways Awareness. Pathways Awareness is dedicated to raising awareness to the gifts received when faith communities include worshippers of all abilities. The Open Hearts, Open Minds, Open Doors program provides information and educational materials about access and inclusion in worship to congregations of all denominations. The mission of Open Hearts, Open Minds, Open Doors is to include persons of all abilities into worship, ministries and leadership positions in houses of faith. This mission is carried out by:

- Explaining how to be inclusive in the “Open Hearts, Open Minds, Open Doors” DVD, Idea Guide, e-newsletter, and Inclusive Congregation Toolkit.
- Granting Open Hearts Awards to congregations to further inclusion efforts.
- Inviting congregations to celebrate Inclusion Awareness Day.
- Providing the “Different Gifts, But the Same Spirit” lesson plans to help children and youth understand inclusion.
- Featuring on-line inclusion in worship resources at [www.inclusioninworship.org](http://www.inclusioninworship.org)

## **INCLUSION RESOURCES FROM PATHWAYS AWARENESS**

*Open Hearts, Open Minds, Open Doors* DVD or video \$20

*The Vulnerable Journey* DVD by Father Henri Nouwen \$20

*Open Hearts, Open Minds, Open Doors* 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary DVD set contains both of the above at a special price of \$20 while quantities last

*Open Hearts, Open Minds, Open Doors Idea Guide* \$4

*Opening Hearts, Minds and Doors* White Paper \$3

*The Vulnerable Journey* by Father Henri Nouwen audiotope/CD \$4

*Celebrating Inclusion in Worship: Seth's Bar Mitzvah* Video \$8

To order Call 1-800-955-2445 or visit [www.inclusioninworship.org](http://www.inclusioninworship.org)

Available for downloading at [www.inclusioninworship.org](http://www.inclusioninworship.org)

*Inclusive Congregation Toolkit*

*Different Gifts, But the Same Spirit* Inclusive Religious Education Lesson Plans

2001-2008 Inclusion Awareness Day Workbooks

Inclusion Shabbat Workbook for Jewish Congregations

Inclusion Awareness Day Workbook for Episcopal Parishes