

Liturgical Accessibility

The Church acknowledges that all persons belong by virtue of their baptism and that disability is an ordinary part of life. From this follows the responsibility of each parish to acknowledge the inherent dignity of each person and to provide access and full integration to individuals with disabilities. Therefore, each parish is called to provide access into all aspects of the communal life of the Church, engaging in relationship and offering appropriate supports. Thus each person is empowered to achieve the fullest measure of personal participation, belonging, serving, and flourishing as part of the Body of Christ.

National Catholic Partnership on Disability (NCPD) November 2016

<https://youtu.be/N8WK9HmF53w>

"In the case of many people with disabilities, integration into the Christian community may require nothing more than issuing an invitation and pursuing it. For some others, however, full participation can only come about if the Church exerts itself to devise innovative programs and techniques. At the very least, we must undertake forms of evangelization that speak to the particular needs of individuals with disabilities, make those liturgical adaptations which promote their active participation and provide helps and services that reflect our loving concern."

US Bishops Pastoral Statement on Persons with Disabilities 14

Avoiding Physical Barriers

Structurally inaccessible buildings are at once a sign and a guarantee of their isolation from the community. Sometimes all that is required to remedy the situation is the installation of outside ramps and railings, increased lighting, **minor modification** of toilet facilities, and perhaps, the removal of a few pews and kneelers. In other cases, **major alterations and redesign of equipment** may be called for. Each parish must examine its own situation to determine the feasibility of such alterations. **Mere cost** must never be the exclusive consideration, however, since the provisions of free access to religious functions for all interested people is a pastoral duty.

Pastoral Statement #21

Avoiding Physical Barriers: *Consideration and Consultation*

Whenever parishes contemplate new construction, they should make provision in their plans for the needs of individuals with disabilities. If both new construction and the adaptation of present buildings are out of the question, the parish should devise other ways to reach its members with disabilities. In cooperation with them, parish leaders may locate substitute facilities, for example, or make a concerted effort to serve at home those who cannot come to church.

Pastoral Statement #22

Avoiding Physical Barriers: *Sensory Barriers*

- Visual
- Auditory (*Deaf or Hard of Hearing*)
- Sensory (*Sights, Sounds, Crowds and Smells*)

One of the best things parishes can do is advertise what they already have available.

Resources for Universal Design

National Catholic Partnership on Disability

www.ncpd.org

Pathways

<https://pathways.org/tools-resources/inclusion-worship/resources/>

Avoiding Attitudinal Barriers

It is essential that all forms of the liturgy be completely accessible to persons with disabilities, since these forms are the essence of the spiritual tie that binds the Christian community together. To exclude members of the parish from these celebrations of the life of the Church, even by passive omission, is to deny the reality of that community.

Pastoral Statement #23

Avoiding Attitudinal Barriers

The creation of a fully accessible parish reaches beyond mere physical accommodation to encompass the attitudes of all parishioners toward persons with disabilities. All members of the faith community have a role to play in the invitation, welcome, and inclusion of people with disabilities.

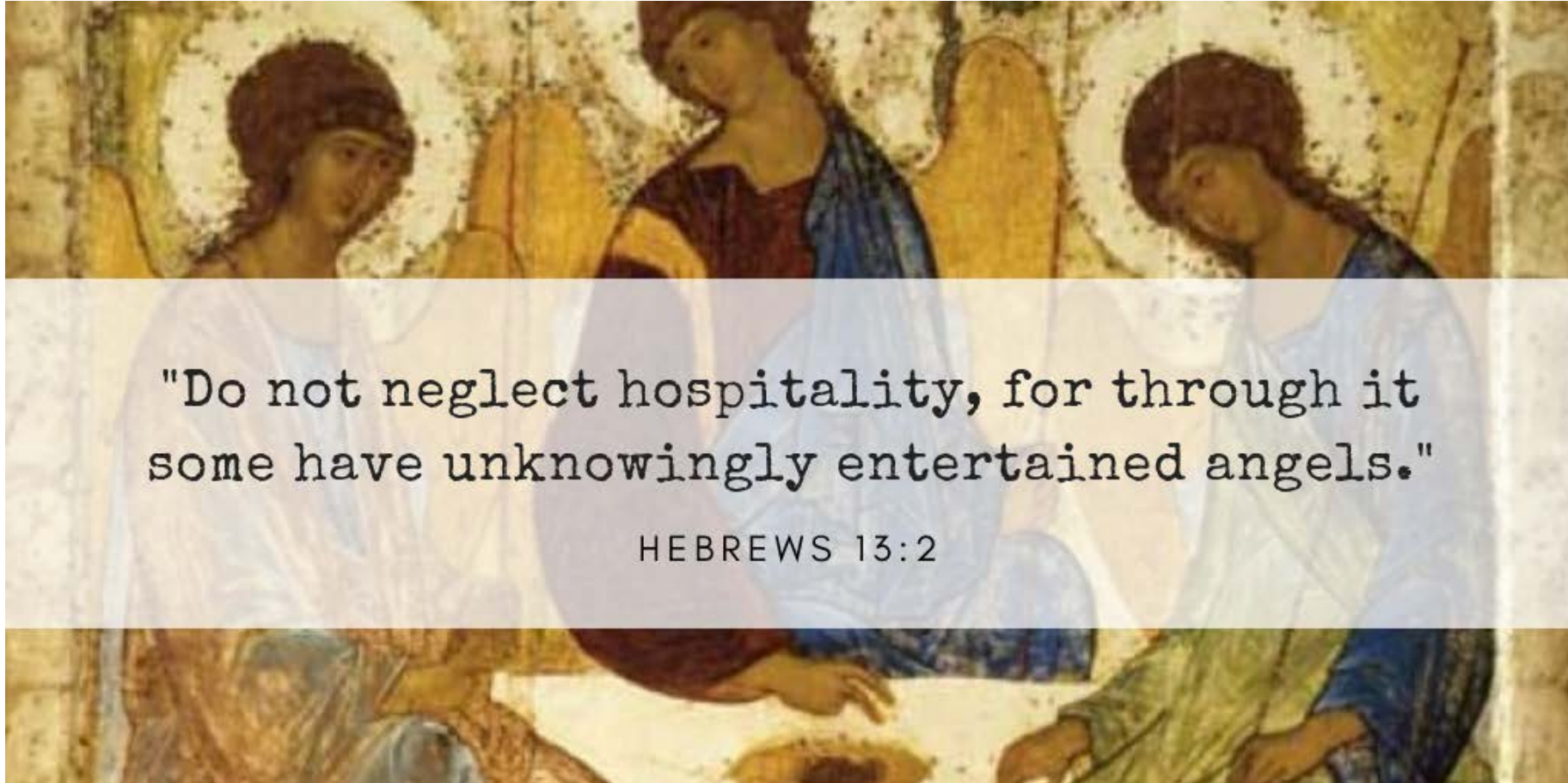
*Guidelines for the Celebration of the Sacraments
with Persons with Disabilities (rev. edition) #7*

Avoiding Attitudinal Barriers:
It Starts at the Top

Avoiding Attitudinal Barriers

- “Some people are uncomfortable around him/her.”
- “We have a special class for children just like your son.”
- “We don’t have any people with disabilities in our congregation.”
- “Maybe your family would feel more comfortable at [x parish]—I believe they do disability ministry.”
- “None of us are trained to work with those children.”
- “Some members of the congregation are finding your family to be distracting.”
- “Perhaps you would be more comfortable sitting in the cry room.”
- “Our church just isn’t big enough to have a disability ministry.”
- “Can [x] participate in Holy Communion?”

Avoiding Attitudinal Barriers: Building Relationships



"Do not neglect hospitality, for through it
some have unknowingly entertained angels."

HEBREWS 13:2

Avoiding Attitudinal Barriers: *A Resource*



10 Dimensions of Belonging (Erik Carter)

<https://www.bc.edu/bc-web/schools/stm/sites/encore/encore-access/fostering-belonging.html>

Avoiding Sacramental Barriers

“The Church seeks to support all in their growth in holiness, and to encourage all in their vocations. Participating in, and being nourished by, the grace of the sacraments is essential to this growth in holiness. Catholic adults and children with disabilities, and their families, earnestly desire full and meaningful participation in the sacramental life of the Church.”

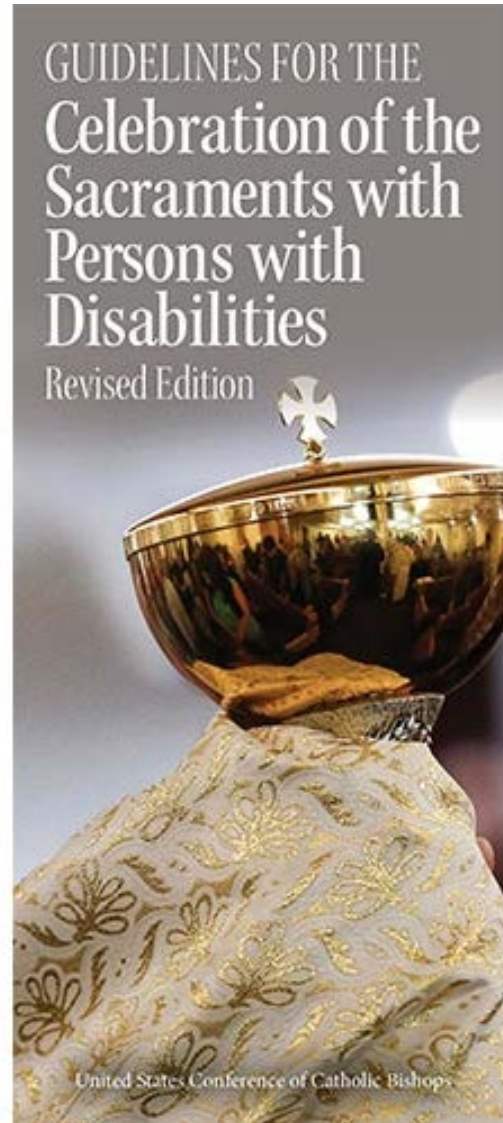
Sacramental Guidelines (Intro)

Avoiding Sacramental Barriers

Parish sacramental celebrations should be accessible to persons with disabilities and open to their full, active, and conscious participation, according to their capacity. Pastoral ministers should not presume to know the needs of persons with disabilities, but should rather—before all else—**consult with them or their advocates before making determinations** about the accessibility of a parish's facilities and the availability of its programs, policies, and ministries. **Full accessibility should be the goal for every parish**, and these adaptations are to be an **ordinary part** of the liturgical life of the parish.

Sacramental Guidelines #3

Avoiding Sacramental Barriers: Resources



Avoiding Sacramental Barriers: Practical and Pastoral Guidance

Catholics who require nourishment through feeding tubes are encouraged to receive Holy Communion, as are all the Catholic faithful. Christ is sacramentally present under each of the species, and Holy Communion can be received under the species of bread or wine alone. Since the full presence of Christ and his sanctifying grace are found in even the smallest piece of the consecrated host or in a mere drop of the consecrated wine, the norm of receiving through the mouth remains the same for those who otherwise use a feeding tube for sustenance, and Holy Communion is not to be administered through a feeding tube. For these communicants it will commonly be possible to place one or a few drops of the Precious Blood on the tongue.

Guidelines #24

Catholics with Celiac Sprue Disease or other conditions that make them gluten intolerant should be given the opportunity to receive a small fragment of a regular host, and made aware of the options to receive a low-gluten host or to receive under the form of wine alone. In the event of intolerance to gluten and wine, mustum may also be an option, with the approval of the local ordinary. Clergy and extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion need to be aware of the possibility of cross-contamination and related issues in order to plan for the safe administration of the sacred species to Catholics with gluten intolerance. For example, the chalice given to a person with gluten intolerance should not contain a particle of the host, and low-gluten altar breads should never be intermingled with regular altar breads. As people may feel self-conscious at the prospect of needing special arrangements for the reception of Holy Communion, pastoral sensitivity in this area is particularly important.

Guidelines #25



Avoiding Barriers...to Service

Full participation in the Christian community has another important aspect that must not be overlooked. **When we think of people with disabilities in relation to ministry, we tend automatically to think of doing something for them. We do not reflect that they can do something for us and with us...** Moreover, they have the same duty as all members of the community to do the Lord's work in the world, according to their God-given talents and capacity. Because individuals may not be fully aware of the contribution they can make, Church leaders should consult with them, offering suggestions on practical ways of serving.

Pastoral Statement # 17

"The answer is love: not that false, saccharine and sanctimonious love, but that which is true, concrete and respectful. To the extent that one is accepted and loved, included in the community and supported in looking to the future with confidence, the true path of life evolves and one experiences enduring happiness. This — as we know — applies to everyone, but for the most fragile people it is like a test. Faith is a great life companion when it lets us touch by hand the presence of a Father who never forsakes his creatures, in any state of their life."

Pope Francis

October 21, 2017