



NATIONAL CATHOLIC PARTNERSHIP ON DISABILITY

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Loyola Press 2019 Opening Doors Parish Award Winner Announced

Washington, D.C. – The National Catholic Partnership on Disability (NCPD), in partnership with Loyola Press, is pleased to announce [San Alejandro Catholic Parish \(St. Alexander\)](#) in Cornelius, Oregon, in the Archdiocese of Portland in Oregon, as the recipient of the Loyola Press 2019 *Opening Doors Parish Award*. The parish will receive \$1000 and a plaque from Loyola Press.

The judges, representing the Archdiocese of Santa Fe and the Diocese of Providence selected San Alejandro Catholic Parish after reviewing numerous applications from across the United States. In their review, the judges looked at ways parishes demonstrate a deep commitment to parishioners with disabilities providing access for full participation in all aspects of parish life: sacramental, catechetical, social, ministerial, and community service.

Irma Rodriguez from the Diocese of Providence: Director, Office of the Apostolate with People with Disabilities noted that: “St. Alexander Catholic Parish community has demonstrated a profound commitment to create a community in which all belong and can worship together. The parish has taken into consideration all modes of sensitivities and learning; creating an accessible parish with a well-planned interior and exterior architectural design in one level (including the entrance, nave, sanctuary, sacristy...) lighting, modes of communion reception, auditory adaptive devices, ASL interpreters in English and Spanish. St. Alexander is a model parish for the United States and exemplifies a parish vision that encourages all Catholics with disabilities (or without) to live and practice their faith...sharing their gifts in service to the parish.”

Deacon Robert Vigil from the Archdiocese of Santa Fe: Director, Pastoral Outreach mentioned “San Alejandro Catholic Parish (St. Alexander) can be used as a model of what all parishes should work to resemble. We know not every parish is economically capable of making this happen immediately. This model also offers visions for short as well as long term planning for access to all people regardless of their disabilities.” The parish planning and creation of an environment in which physical accessibility to the building is as important as the faith formation for its parishioners is commendable.”

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Upon learning of the award selection, **Marsha Rivas**, Chair of the NCPD Board of Directors, stated: “We commend San Alejandro Parish for their exemplary modeling of community collaboration to build a church with universal design for accessibility at every turn, where ALL are welcome and able to live their Faith. From this recognition by Loyola Press, countless parishes in the US will see San Alejandro as a benchmark to revitalize their own parish.”

Charleen Katra, NCPD Executive Director notes: “It is truly rare to see such intentional and comprehensive accessibility planning so well executed on a single parish campus! We believe that St. Alejandro Catholic Parish is shining a very bright light on what hospitality and evangelization looks and feels like when God's plan for his people is fully embraced. We are grateful to Loyola Press for highlighting St. Alejandro Catholic Parish as a vibrant inspiration for other faith communities to emulate.”

By granting this award to San Alejandro Catholic Parish (St. Alexander), NCPD and Loyola Press aim to show parishes large and small, old and new, that sowing seeds of welcome to persons with disabilities and making accommodations for all to partake at the Lord’s table produces a bountiful harvest that nourishes the entire parish and beyond.

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[Loyola Press](#) is a Catholic publishing company providing materials and resources for catechists as well as all Catholics to grow in a greater knowledge and understanding of their faith. Loyola Press has been active in facilitating greater inclusion for people with disabilities in the Church through their adaptive sacramental preparation kits and the *Adaptive Finding God* curriculum. Their mission, as appears on their website (loyolapress.com) states, “Loyola Press is much more than a publishing company. As a Jesuit Ministry, we strive to help you find God in all things and develop a deep, personal relationship with Jesus Christ. As an apostolate of the USA Midwest Province of the Society of Jesus (commonly known as the Jesuits), Loyola Press embraces the Jesuit passion for helping people to find God in all things. We continue the Jesuit tradition of excellence and service through the content we create and by being people for others.”

Since 1982, the [National Catholic Partnership on Disability \(NCPD\)](#) has served the U.S. Catholic Church by providing resources, training, consultation and advocacy for the estimated 15 million U.S. Catholics who live with disability. Visit www.ncpd.org for more information on NCPD’s programs and services.