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ROMAN CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF ROCHESTER NY

DEAF  
MINISTRY  
*Plan of Action*






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## Resources

National Catholic Office  
for the Deaf  
[www.ncod.org](http://www.ncod.org)

International Catholic Deaf  
Association  
[www.icda-us.org](http://www.icda-us.org)

Camp Mark Seven  
[www.Campmark7.org](http://www.Campmark7.org)

De Sales Center  
[www.desales.org](http://www.desales.org)

R.I.T. Center for Religious Life  
[www.rit.edu/studentaffairs/religion](http://www.rit.edu/studentaffairs/religion)

Emmanuel Church of the Deaf  
[www.stmonicaofrochester.org](http://www.stmonicaofrochester.org)

National Center for Deaf  
Health Resource  
[www.urmc.rochester.edu/ncdhr/  
ResourceDirectory](http://www.urmc.rochester.edu/ncdhr/ResourceDirectory)

**The Diocese of Rochester is committed** to caring for the entire deaf community with its many common values intertwined with unique needs and gifts. To fully support the growth and maturity of the Deaf Catholic Community, we recommend the following strategic actions.

Over the past year, we have worked with representatives from the Deaf Catholic Community in the development of this plan of action. We will continue to work collaboratively to implement these recommendations.

## Statement of Purpose

**The Deaf Catholic Community of Rochester** is rich in diversity and a blessing for our local Church with many gifts to share. Within the deaf community there are many co-cultures including: hard of hearing, deaf and blind, those with cochlear implants and late deafened.

**We value relationships** that are deeply caring, compassionate, and loving, with others who are deaf. We strive for better ways to reach out to the hearing community and foster collaboration with all Catholics, hearing and deaf.

**We rely on our visual ability** in order to understand and interact with the world around us, to build community, as well as to learn and grow our capacity to lead a rich life. Because of this, much of our culture is based on barrier-free visual access to the world.

**We seek ways to engage those who are deaf** in leadership roles within the Church including the Priesthood, Diaconate, Religious Life, Pastoral Administrators, Catechists, Lectors, and Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion.

**We are fully part of the diverse makeup** of our society and faith community. We desire understanding and appreciation of our language and culture by all our hearing Catholic brothers and sisters who belong to the same parishes and communities in which we live.

**We believe that being deaf is a gift from God.** We hope to share our gifts through full participation in the Liturgy and other religious activities with the assistance of sign language interpreters, other visual aids, and existing technologies.

**We value the rich and varied experience** of the Deaf Catholic Community. We aspire to self-determination, which acknowledges the collective wisdom and experience of our community in making decisions which affect our lives.

**We hope to eliminate barriers** to communication and participation in the full life of the Church, and to increase understanding of our culture so that these values can be fully realized and integrated.

## FORMATION PRIORITIES

- Actively recruit and train priests, deacons, men and women religious, and lay ministers to work with the deaf, especially among the deaf
- Improve access to faith formation opportunities for the deaf and hard of hearing

### ► Action Steps

Develop training to promote lay leadership among the Deaf Catholic Community

Develop workshops about deaf culture and ministry with the deaf and hard of hearing for pastoral leaders and interested parishioners

Promote ongoing dialogue with Vocations Office, Deacon Personnel and St. Bernard's School of Theology and Ministry about vocations and opportunities in Deaf Ministry

Facilitate conversations with parish leaders about reasonable accommodations for faith formation and liturgies with the deaf and hard of hearing

Make information on ASL classes available to parishes where deaf parishioners or their families have been identified to facilitate direct communication and promote interpersonal relationships

Work with the Department of Evangelization and Catechesis to compile a list of deaf-appropriate religious education and sacramental preparation resources to share with catechetical leaders and staff who are working with deaf individuals

Develop a brochure on how to communicate with the deaf and hard of hearing including communication etiquette and tips on how to use an interpreter

Provide scripts for Creating a Safe Environment (CASE) and all other mandatory trainings



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Photo by Daniel Donoli

## EVANGELIZATION PRIORITIES

- Empower the Deaf Catholic Community to become agents of the new evangelization
- Embrace Deaf Catholics into all aspects of the life of the Church of Rochester
- Conduct outreach to young deaf and hard of hearing adults
- Create awareness of the resources available to the Deaf Catholic Community

### ► Action Steps

Recruit and train outreach team to identify members of the Deaf Catholic Community and coordinate evangelization efforts

Provide list of Diocesan interpreters to parishes, updated annually

Coordinate Diocesan gathering for the deaf community

Invite deaf lectors to minister during Diocesan events (with voice interpreter)

Offer interpreters for Diocesan programs and events

Utilize internet and social media resources to increase awareness of the Deaf Catholic Community

Update Diocesan website to include profiles on deaf clergy, feature stories, and upcoming events/activities for the deaf community

Work with the RIT Campus Minister to provide outreach to deaf college students and young adults at the National Technical Institute for the Deaf (NTID)

Work with the IT Department to investigate feasibility of captioning Diocesan videos

# DEAF MINISTRY

## We, the Deaf Catholic Community

of the Diocese of Rochester, are called by God

- To celebrate and share our gifts with one another and the entire People of God
- To actively participate in every aspect of the Church's life
- To reach out to those Deaf and Hard of Hearing Catholics who hunger for the word of God and a community of faith



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Office for Cultural Diversity  
1150 Buffalo Road  
Rochester, NY 14624  
585-328-3210  
www.dor.org

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