Greetings Everyone! Happy Summer!

Many things have been happening this spring as we approached the summer. We were blessed to have Archbishop Lori and Fr. Mike Depcik celebrate Mass for the Catholic Deaf Community on May 19. This was quite an honor considering that Archbishop Lori has a very full schedule and he had come to celebrate Mass with us just 11 months prior to that. There are many other places where this does not happen. We are grateful for his support.

Fr. Mike Depcik was back to celebrate Mass with us on June 9 for the feast of Pentecost, assisted by Deacon Joe Knepper. It has been a real blessing that he has come four times this year and plans to come again four times next year. The dates for next year are: September 15 and November 17 in 2019, and April 26 and May 31 in 2020. So mark your calendars to save the dates. I will be publishing the locations, etc. later.

During these last few months, we have been involved in producing a promotional video about Deaf Ministry. The video crew was present at both of the Masses described above, and also filmed some interviews with Archbishop Lori, Fr. Mike Depcik, and other members of our Deaf Community. The purpose of the video is to encourage others to learn ASL and become involved in bringing the Gospel, the message of Jesus and God’s love to Deaf people. We emphasize the large number of Deaf people in this area and that less than 7% of Deaf people attend church regularly. We would like to encourage seminarians as well as others to learn ASL and to make Deaf people feel welcome in the Catholic Church. When the video is complete, I will send out a link so you can see it and share it.
The Archdiocese has identified one of the seminarians, Mr. Luke Koski, to learn ASL. Luke will be beginning his second year of studying theology and has several more years of training before he becomes a priest. He has already taken a course in ASL at Towson University and is anxious to improve his ASL skills to better minister with the Deaf people he will meet here in the Archdiocese of Baltimore.

Ms. Marie Williams, also a member of our Catholic Deaf Community, was able to attend her first session of the Spiritual Mentorship Program that is given by the School of Faith in Kansas City. Interpreters were provided. (Fr. Christopher Klusman, a Deaf priest from Milwaukee, also attended this session. In this photo, Marie helps celebrate his 8th year as a priest.) The program is a two-year course of study that aims to form Spiritual Mentors to serve as guide and companion to others on their journey to holiness.

Two members of the Deaf Community attended the National Deaf Cursillo on June 13-16 in Columbia, IL. More than 2,300 Deaf people have experienced this retreat weekend, and many go on to become national Deaf Catholic leaders. The Cursillo helps people to understand what it means to follow Christ, and how to help each other follow Christ. It helps participants experience the presence and love of Jesus Christ and realize the importance of being a Christian in today’s world. Ms. Carol Polizzi and Ms. Sue Smith were able to attend in June. Fr. Mike Depcik served on the retreat team.

In April, we completed the second part of a three-part series called ChristLife.

The first part, Discovering Christ was covered in January and February. The second part, Following Christ was covered in March and April. These sessions have been taking place in conjunction with St. Ignatius of Loyola parish in Ijamsville, MD. As part of the parish program, we had a Deaf small group of about nine people. The program was well received. We are looking forward to wrapping up with the third session, Sharing Christ, in the fall.
For those who are interested, there will be a Deaf Women’s Retreat in NJ in August and a Deaf Men’s Retreat in NJ in September. Both look like they would be great experiences, and not too far away.

Have a Great Summer, Everyone!

Chris

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