



United States  
Conference of  
Catholic Bishops

# Pilgrims on the Way of Hope: A Resource for the Jubilee of People with Disabilities

## **Jubilee 2025: Pilgrims of Hope**

United States Conference of  
Catholic Bishops

## **Jubilee of People with Disabilities: Resource Packet**

April 28-29, 2025

## **INTRODUCTION & OVERVIEW**

The Holy See has designated a number of Jubilee Days throughout 2025 to recognize and celebrate different groups of people and various ministries in the Church. The Jubilee of People with Disabilities will be held from Monday, April 28, to Tuesday, April 29; however, these resources can be used for engaging and celebrating persons with disabilities at any time throughout the Jubilee Year.

This resource packet is for anyone who finds it beneficial. It can be used and/or adapted by dioceses, eparchies, parishes, schools, campuses, apostolates, movements, organizations, or individuals to plan their celebration of the Jubilee of People with Disabilities. It might also serve as a catalyst or inspiration for the creation and development of local or year-round resources for persons with

disabilities in your community.

For persons with disabilities or ministries with persons with disabilities that are making a Jubilee pilgrimage to Rome or to a particular Jubilee celebration in a diocese or eparchy within the United States during 2025, this packet can also serve as an aid in the preparation or experience of that trip.



Additional resources for the Jubilee of People with Disabilities and other celebrations can be found online at the USCCB Jubilee Year web pages: available in English at <https://www.usccb.org/committees/jubilee-2025> and available in Spanish at <https://www.usccb.org/es/committees/jubileo-2025>.

## **SPIRITUAL REFLECTION**

In anticipation of the Jubilee of People with Disabilities, set within a yearlong celebration of hope, we remember the words of Pope Francis in his message to people with disabilities on the 2022 International Day of Persons with Disabilities:

*We come to realize that we exist as  
an us and not a them whenever  
disability, whether temporary or due to*



*natural aging, affects ourselves or someone for whom we care. Then we begin to look at reality with new eyes and we see the need to break down even those barriers that at first seemed insignificant. Nothing, however, can detract from our certainty that no disability – temporary, acquired or permanent – can change the fact that we are all children of the one Father and enjoy the same dignity. The Lord loves us all with the same tender, fatherly and unconditional love.*

Let us take these words from Pope Francis as an inspiration to look at reality with new eyes and see how the Lord is at work in our lives. We are all called to be active members of the Church community, and we all belong to the Body of Christ. It is in Christ that we find our hope and our joy for our lives. All persons with disabilities are a great gift to the Church and help to inspire hope and joy in the other members of our communities.

Let us also work to recognize the beautiful gifts and talents of all the faithful in the Body of Christ, especially those persons with disabilities who bring their unique gifts and talents to the community. During this Jubilee of People with Disabilities, let us work to highlight persons with disabilities in our specific dioceses, schools, and parishes who bring hope and joy. When we lift up and recognize the most vulnerable members of our communities with joy and appreciation, we highlight their dignity and worth in a beautiful way for others to welcome them personally as well.

We look to Christ as the source of our hope and invite Him to radiate within each of us a deeper love for one another and cultivate a place of belonging for all the faithful in our Churches. It is the hope we have in Christ that urges us to live charity towards one another.

## SUGGESTIONS FOR PILGRIM PREPARATION

One major element of the Jubilee celebration for Catholics is making pilgrimage. For some, that may involve going to Rome, where international pilgrims traditionally visit the Holy Doors of the four great basilicas (Saint Peter, Saint Paul Outside the Walls, Saint Mary Major, and Saint John Lateran). For most others, though, local Jubilee pilgrimages can be made to diocesan or eparchial cathedrals, churches, and/or religious sites.

*If headed to Rome for the Jubilee of People with Disabilities:*

Should you or your ministry/group/community decide to travel to Rome for the Jubilee of People with Disabilities (April 28-29, 2025), the following may be helpful:

- You can develop a trip on your own or go through a licensed tour operator that specializes or has experience in religious travel. The latter option may cost extra, but it can save a local organizer time; additionally, those operators may have existing connections with vendors and may be able to advise on travel concerns. PLEASE NOTE: The USCCB does not endorse nor identify any licensed tour operator as the official U.S. tour operator.
- The official Jubilee website for the Jubilee of People with Disabilities can be found [here](#).
- Pilgrims and groups may also consider additional programs and gatherings, either planned on their own or events hosted by organizations, apostolates, episcopal conferences, or movements.
- Prepare with liturgies, retreats, devotional and service experiences, community building, catechesis, and fundraising, as needed. Take



time for prayer, especially in front of the Blessed Sacrament.

- Consider collaborating with other diocesan offices, families, and local groups to include more persons with disabilities who are interested in attending and invite others who can aid in caring for the persons with disabilities in your group while you are on the pilgrimage together.
- After returning home or to the United States, take time for prayer and theological reflection on the graces of God received during the pilgrimage to Rome. If you went as a group, continue to gather in the weeks and months following the trip to support one another and coordinate missionary activity.

*If coordinating a local pilgrimage within the United States for persons with disabilities:*

It is highly recommended to make pilgrimage to one's own diocesan or eparchial cathedral or other church(es) or religious site(s) designated by the bishop or eparch.

- Planning for a local pilgrimage can take place at any time of year, or it can be done at the same time as the Jubilee of People with Disabilities (April 28-29, 2025). The timing, as well as the exact local destination, is at the discretion of the local organizer(s).
- Research the pilgrimage destination to ensure that your visit does not coincide with liturgical or local community events or is being done within the posted opening hours for the site. You may wish to contact someone in leadership at the location in advance, especially if you plan to bring a group.

- After returning home (even if the trip was local), take time for prayer and theological reflection on the graces of God received during the pilgrimage experience. If you went as a group, continue to gather in the weeks and months following the trip to support one another and coordinate missionary activity.

## **SUGGESTIONS FOR CELEBRATING PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES LOCALLY**

*Suggestions for Parishes*

- Use the weekend liturgies on the weekend preceding the Jubilee of People with Disabilities (April 26-27, 2025) to recognize all the people with disabilities in the community: in the homily, general intercessions, with a special blessing, or by inviting people with disabilities to serve in key liturgical roles. An example of a petition for the Prayer of the Faithful might include:

*For all persons with disabilities in our local community, that they may know God's immense love for them and our gratitude to God for their presence and active participation in our community as members of the Body of Christ. We pray to the Lord...*

- Host a Jubilee Eucharistic Holy Hour at your parish during the week of the Jubilee of People with Disabilities, inviting persons with disabilities to lead and witness their faith to the larger community.
- Plan a local pilgrimage for persons with disabilities to your diocesan/eparchial cathedral or to another religious site or beautiful church in your area, using the ideas laid out in the previous section.



### *Suggestions for Dioceses and Eparchies*

- Post stories about persons with disabilities and ministry leaders accompanying persons with disabilities on the diocesan or eparchial website, social media channels, and communications (magazine, newspaper, newsletter, etc.) prior to and/or during the Jubilee of People with Disabilities April 28-29, 2025.
- Host a diocesan/eparchial-wide Jubilee gathering of persons with disabilities with the bishop/eparch. This can be a Eucharistic Holy Hour, liturgy, dinner, meet-and-greet social, and/or a virtual event, providing persons with disabilities across the diocese/eparchy with the opportunity to engage with their episcopal shepherd.
- Encourage all diocesan/eparchial offices and departments to feature, celebrate, or recognize persons with disabilities during April 2025, centered around the global Jubilee celebration. This might need to be preceded by a workshop or meeting with diocesan/eparchial staff to coordinate efforts.

## **ADDITIONAL RESOURCES & DOCUMENTS**

- [Dignitas Infinita](#), Declaration of the Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith on Human Dignity, (2024): A declaration on human dignity, a central theme in Christian thought, applying to all the faithful in the life of the Church, and maintaining “awareness of human dignity amid the complex historical moment in which we are living.” Available online.
- [Pastoral Statement of U.S. Catholic Bishops on Persons with Disabilities](#), United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (1978): a pastoral statement calling all the faithful to embrace their responsibility to care for their brothers and sisters with disabilities. Available online.
- [Guidelines for the Celebration of the Sacraments with Persons with Disabilities, Revised Edition](#), United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (2017): a revised and expanded version of the guidelines to reiterate the essential work of making all forms of the liturgy completely accessible to persons with disabilities. Available online.
- [Welcome and Justice for Persons with Disabilities: A Framework of Access and Inclusion](#), United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (1998): a moral framework based upon Catholic documents which serves as a guide for contemplation and action among the faithful. Available online.
- [USCCB Evangelization and Catechesis, Catechesis with People with Disabilities Web Page](#), with resources for catechesis with persons with disabilities, guidelines for celebrating the sacraments with persons with disabilities, and webinars on how to teach prayer to persons with disabilities. Available online.
- [National Catholic Partnership on Disability \(NCPD\)](#) works with dioceses, parishes, ministers, and laity to promote the full and meaningful participation of persons with disabilities in the life of the Church. Available online.
- [National Catholic Office for the Deaf \(NCOD\)](#) is the national voice that expresses the spiritual needs of the American Catholic Deaf Community, focuses on updating the knowledge and skills of pastoral workers with Deaf persons, and acts as a support group for pastoral workers. Available online.



## KEY SAINTS & BLESSEDS

### *Companions of Persons with Disabilities*

- **St. Germain Cousin (1579-1601, feast day June 15)** was born with a misshapen right hand and paralysis in her hand. She was treated poorly because of her disability and was not permitted to go to school. St. Germain grew in love for the Lord despite her difficult life of ill treatment and died at a very young age. Her body was found incorrupt, and miracles started to be attributed to her once her body was exhumed.
- **St. Joseph of Cupertino (1603-1663, feast day September 18)**, patron saint for people with developmental disabilities, grew up poor and never seemed to fit in as a child. He became a priest with the Franciscan friars and lived a life of beautiful union with God and holiness, known for his levitations and ecstasies and miraculous curing of the sick. He was forced to live a solitary life because of the crowds who were drawn to him.
- **Bl. Alexius Kim Si-U (1782-1815, feast day September 20)**, one of the Korean blessed martyred during the Eulhae Persecution, became Catholic at a young age and taught the other people in his village about the Catholic faith. He was born paralyzed and was unable to work, thus relying on the charity of others, and he volunteered himself when the police came and arrested the Catholics in his town. He died from starvation in prison but never gave up sharing the faith with everyone around him.
- **St. Kateri Tekakwitha (1656-1680, feast day July 14)**, patroness of the environment, was the first Native American to be recognized as a saint. She converted to Catholicism at age 19 and took a vow of chastity. St. Kateri was very devout and suffered from smallpox at the age of four which killed her family and left her with a badly scarred face and impaired vision.

## PRAYERS

### **Prayer for People with Disabilities**

(Diocese of San Angelo)

*Lord Our God,  
you make every person in your divine image.*

*You know our needs and you fulfill our desires.  
You protect us when we are fragile  
and give us courage for each new day.*

*Help us to understand the power  
and wisdom of human vulnerability.  
Open our hearts to accept our weakness in  
your strength.*

*Give us the courage to break down the barriers  
that separate us from one another.  
Enable us to reach out lovingly to all your  
children, so that, together, we may all  
participate fully in parish life and worship.*

*Make us grateful for the talents and abilities  
that all people can share with the Church.  
Guide our actions to create truly welcoming  
communities that are open to the gifts of each  
individual, celebrating our interdependence  
with respect for all life.*

*Help us to appreciate all those, living with  
disabilities, who contribute their time and  
talents, even in the face of obstacles or  
misunderstanding.*

*We look to the future with optimism and with  
faith in you, as we pursue our call to provide  
justice and fullness of life for all people with  
disabilities.*

*We pray that every man, woman, and child  
may develop their potential.*

*We offer you these prayers as one flock,  
following the same shepherd, Jesus Christ, your  
Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with  
you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God,  
forever and ever. Amen.*



## **Prayer for Persons with Disabilities**

(Diocese of Green Bay)

*God our Father, who created all people in your image: give persons with physical, cognitive, or emotional disabilities opportunities to do all that they are able to, and strengthen them to overcome challenges.*

*Jesus, who showed great compassion for those who suffer: comfort all who feel like their gifts are not used or that their value is not understood, so that they might take courage in your affection.*

*Holy Spirit, who fills believers with all good gifts: help me to reach out to persons with disabilities through friendship, care, and working to be sure that our church includes them in everything that we do and to break down barriers to inclusion in society.*

*We ask this in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, Amen.*

