

**Deaf Awareness Week**  
**Circular 2007-30**

**To: Parish Priests, Catholic School Principals, and Local Religious Superiors – Men and Women**

The Catholic Ministry to Deaf Peoples, Inc. (CMDP) wants me to remind all your charges through you, Dear Collaborators, about the Deaf Awareness Week from November 10-17, 2007. Here are some data about the Deaf and Hard of Hearing:

- Persons with Disabilities (PWD's), including the Deaf, are:
  - 10% of the total population of Developing Countries like the Philippines, according to the World Health Organization
  - 2.9% in the Philippines according to our own DOH
  - 1.23% in the Philippines according to our own NSO
- In 2005 98% of disabled children in Developing Countries have no access to education, according to Disability Tribune
  - In the Philippines, there are 80,000 school-age disabled children--- but only 50,000 (62.5%) are enrolled in the 794 special SPED centers and schools for the PWDs according to DepEd SPED Concern 2005.
  - In Manila, there are 9,000 school-age disabled children... but only 5,000 are enrolled in the schools. The figure gets smaller when the children get to grade IV when most drop out due to lack of transportation money.
  - In Metro Manila, there are around 900 deaf school-age children. Of these, only 144 (16%) can be supported by CMDP. The proportion gets smaller, if we take into account
    1. that some if those deaf schoolers came from neighboring provinces like Batangas, Bulacan, Cavite, Laguna, Rizal, and Quezon.
    2. that most of deaf-school-age children enroll in elementary schools late into their teens due to late detection of their inability.

- In a CMDP Survey, most of the families of deaf children and youth belong to the poor with daily earnings of \$1 (PhP 43) to \$2 (PhP 86) per day and an average family size of 6 members. CMDP supports the moderate to extreme poor segment of their group who because of scarcity are most likely to sacrifice education of their children that eventually takes its toll on their psycho social and spiritual developments.
  - Parents of deaf children and youth cannot even assume their duty as their primary educator because they do not know how to communicate with them.
    - 80.55% of parents (76.67% of their spouses) only know less than 1000 words of basic sign language
    - 33.33% knows gestures only.
    - 13.89% do not communicate with their deaf children at all. 3.33% of the mothers are not communicating with their deaf children.

Because of the lack of information and support, the parents and guardians do not know how to deal with their deaf children, leaving the latter isolated and vulnerable.

- Their isolation and vulnerability presents even greater problems: Sexual and physical abuses against the deaf are high. CMDP services an annual average of 11 cases of abuse since 1997 which includes incest, rape, acts of lasciviousness, and sexual harassment among others, done mostly to girls below 18. These are cases within metro Manila and neighboring provinces and within the reach of CDMP alone. There are more cases even within that are unreported and unmediated.
- Aside from CMDP, there are other organizations both GO's and NGO's servicing the deaf and hard of hearing people in the Country which our Diocese through our NPowerd net-work and work for the sake of all the people with disabilities.

Given in the Chancery in Fairview, Quezon City, this 9<sup>th</sup> day of October in the Year of Our Lord, 2007.

**Most Rev. Antonio R. Tobias, DD**  
Bishop

Attested by:

**Rev. Fr. Ambrosio Nonato C. Legaspi**  
Priest Coordinator, NPowerd