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Words of welcome from a parish

Thomas Reese | Oct. 5, 2013 NCR Today

Being a welcoming Christian community is a goal of many Catholic parishes today. Below is a beautiful and inclusive text used in some parish bulletins to welcome people. I recently discovered it in St. Patrick's Church in Oakland, California. It has been around for awhile [1], but after six months of Pope Francis, it deserves repeating.

> We extend a special welcome to those who are single, married, divorced, gay, filthy rich, dirt poor, *yo no hablo inglés*. We extend a special welcome to those who are crying newborns, skinny as a rail or could afford to lose a few pounds. We welcome you if you can sing like Andrea Bocelli or like our pastor who can't carry a note in a bucket. You're welcome here if you're "just browsing," just woke up or just got out of jail. We don't care if you're more Catholic than the Pope, or haven't been in church since little Joey's Baptism. We extend a special welcome to those who are over 60 but not grown up yet, and to teenagers who are growing up too fast. We welcome soccer moms, NASCAR dads, starving artists, tree-huggers, latte-sippers, vegetarians, junk-food eaters. We welcome those who are in recovery or still addicted. We welcome you if you're having problems or you're down in the dumps or if you don't like "organized religion," we've been there too. If you blew all your offering money at the dog track, work too hard, don't work, can't spell, or because grandma is in town and wanted to go to church. We welcome those who are inked, pierced or both. We offer a special welcome to those who could use a prayer now, had religion shoved down your throat as a kid or got lost in traffic and wound up here by mistake. We welcome tourists, seekers and doubters, bleeding hearts...and you!

If your parish has special welcoming greeting, share it with us in the comments section below.

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Links:
[1] http://www.uscatholic.org/blog/2012/07/all-are-welcome-really-message-were-sending-our-parishes