



## Hearing Loops Help People with Hearing Loss

The Apostolate is always working to promote the full inclusion of every person in the life of the Church. Many parishes are realizing that people with hearing loss are often unable to clearly hear the readings and prayers at Mass. Thankfully, there are ways to overcome such challenges by taking advantage of new forms of technology such as hearing loop systems.

Hearing loop systems provide a magnetic wireless audio signal that is picked up by hearing aids set to the “T-coil (short for telecoil)” setting. Most new hearing aids have this setting. Special wires that are often installed in the floor of a building comprise the hearing loop that broadcasts audio signals from microphones directly to hearing aids. The result is dramatically improved speech perception and intelligibility without distracting background noise. Hearing aid T-coils are turned on by the push of a button or toggle switch. Many cochlear implants also include T-coils, which allow users to take advantage of hearing loop technology. For those with hearing loss who do not use hearing

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aids or cochlear implants, inexpensive portable receivers with T-coils are available so that they can enjoy the clarity of speech sounds transmitted through hearing loops.

Wanting to learn more about hearing loop systems, Deacon Jim Hoegemeier of the Apostolate recently visited Immaculate Conception Parish in Kieler where a hearing loop system was recently installed with financial assistance from the Apostolate. The system was installed by My Hearing Loop, LLC, based in Platteville. Mike Mair, the owner of the company, led the demonstration of the hearing loop system. Also participating in the

demonstration were Rev. Bernie Rott, pastor of Immaculate Conception Parish, Jeff Richard, chair of the parish finance committee, and Carol Watson, a parishioner who uses a hearing aid. Special equipment was provided so that those participating in the demonstration could hear the difference between what one hears using an actual hearing aid not connected to the hearing loop system and what one hears through the same hearing aid connected to the hearing loop system through use of the T-coil setting.

The difference was amazing,” said Deacon Jim. “It wasn’t that the voices were louder when heard through the hearing loop. The hearing loop made the voices sound so much clearer. I now understand why hearing loops are receiving such a positive response.”

While hearing loop technology has become the standard in several European countries, it is just beginning to gain popularity in the United



Dcn. Jim Hoegemeier experiences hearing loop technology during a demonstration at Immaculate Conception Parish in Kieler

States. Faith communities, including several parishes in the Diocese of Madison that have already installed hearing loop systems, are leading the way. Several parishes are considering installing hearing loop systems.

The Apostolate encourages people with hearing loss and parish leaders to learn more about the benefits of hearing loop technology, as well as how the Apostolate can help parishes with expenses related to the installation of hearing loop systems. In the past five years, the Apostolate provided grants to several parishes which could not afford to install hearing loop systems on their own. For additional information, contact Deacon Jim Hoegemeier of the Apostolate at (608) 821-3051.