

Religious Ed Coordinators Explore Teaching Methods

By Joan M. Smith

Religious education has evolved from a program primarily focused on instructing Catholic pupils attending public schools, to one encompassing all ages in all areas of faith development.

And it has also evolved in methodology: from a system of instilling catechetical questions and answers by rote, to a system directed by

lay and religious catechists trained in various teaching techniques.

One such technique was defined last week by Liz Mauer of the Association of Religious Educators (ARE) as "the process of critical reflection using reason, memory and imagination on present action and experience."

She also said the method could be used in preaching as well as teaching.

And it was that method that Father Thomas H. Groome, Ph.D. associate professor of theology and religious education at Boston College, discussed in a series of presentations entitled "Praxis and Christian Religious Education." Dr. Groome was guest speaker at the three-day seminar co-sponsored by the diocesan Religious Education Department and the ARE, Jan. 24-26, at the Notre Dame Retreat House. The program was coordinated by ARE core members Kathleen Mahoney, St. Anne's parish; Sister Lucille Lenhard, Our Lady of Lourdes in Elmira; Eileen Slagis, St. Joseph's in Penfield; and Liz from St. Stephen's in Geneva.

Dr. Groome during his talks referred to religious educators as "key educators who have the opportunity of shaping people's lives in their faith community." His presentations offered those attending time to reflect, discuss and question his



Photo by Joan M. Smith

Taking a moment for informal discussion are Sister Lucille, Eileen Slagis, Father Groome, whose book "Christian Religious Education: Sharing Our Story and Vision," has been published by Harper and Row, Liz Mauer and Kathleen Mahoney.

theories on how to pursue this opportunity.

Conference participants were enthusiastic not only about the informative sessions but also about the chance to interact with their colleagues.

"Dealing with all the coordinators was great," said Sister Mary Kay Ryan, who

added she was anxious to share what she had learned with her fellow catechists at St. Elizabeth Seton parish.

Eileen Slagis was impressed with "the tremendous dialogue going on about their (the coordinators') work," and their "coming to grips with a sense of Church and ministry."

Vatican II changed many

practices and concepts and the Courier-Journal wondered if these changes had had any significant effect on the direction of religious education.

"The biggest change was coming back to the realization for the need of content and experience," Liz said and added, "That was what the early church was all about."



Deaf Theater

The National Theater of the Deaf will present "Parzival, From the Horse's Mouth" at 8 p.m. on Friday and Saturday, Feb. 4 and 5, at the NTID Theater at RIT. Tickets are \$3 for students, staff and senior citizens; \$5 for the general public; and are available at the box office on campus. William Seago, with umbrella, plays Parzival, and Mike Lamitola plays the horse, Nevefere.

Director Certified

Hornell — Gary G. Deats, activities director of St. James Mercy Hospital's Aquinas Center, has received his professional certification as a Therapeutic Recreation Specialist.

He recently was notified of his achievement by the National Council for Therapeutic Certification in Washington, D.C.

Deats has an associate's degree from Corning Community College and a bachelor's from Brockport State. He joined the Aquinas Center staff in 1980, where he assists in program and treatment planning, supervises recreation programs, and works in individual and group counseling. He also serves as a member of the hospital's Activities Committee and as chairman of its Benefits Committee.



Ada Maria Isasi-Diaz was the speaker at the Ecumenical Preaching Mission.

'Common Source of Faith' Celebrated in Elmira

Elmira — The Ecumenical Preaching Mission which took place here last week combined the old Lenten Preaching Mission and the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity.

"It was a time for area Christians to worship together, to acknowledge and to celebrate our common heritage — our common source of faith," said Margery S. Nurnberg, director of the diocesan Office of Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs.

Guest speaker was Ada Maria Isasi-Diaz, a laywoman from Rochester who has worked in two inner city parishes. For several years she was with the Women's Ordination Conference and now has established her own consultant service as well as lecturing and writing.

"Thirst for Justice and You Will See God" was the theme of the mission. Ms. Isasi-Diaz stressed the importance of the beatitudes as a way of life.

Insisting on the need for personal conversion, she stated that the Gospel calls us

to a preferential option for the poor, to be "prejudiced in favor of the poor."

Ms. Isasi-Diaz told the clergy and laypersons present during the four nights of the mission that as people living in a First World country we are called to be in solidarity with the poor. "Solidarity can only happen when we are all merciful, have compassion, are willing to relate personally to the poor, to establish a mutuality with them," she said.

She said we should create a "community of struggle" to seek not only to help the poor and the oppressed but "to change the oppressive structures of our sexism, racism, classism ... This might require that we witness in a radical way by giving public testimony of our commitment."

During the three mornings of the mission, Ms. Isasi-Diaz met with those in ministry, and discussions centered around feminist liberation theology. "We validate our woman experience," she said, "and insist on affirming that it teaches us about questions of ultimate meaning, such as the

value of life and our understanding of God."

The liturgy discussion raised practical questions on the need for the community to be totally involved in preparation.

On the final day, she insisted that ministers should facilitate the gifts of those in the community instead of stifling them by monopolizing all ministries. "Let us free our imaginations," she said, "so we can dream dreams and see visions in regard to ministry instead of continuing to patch up the old structure of Church ministry."

The Rev. Kurt Traugott, pastor of First United Church of Christ, summed up the mission: "Those who attended cannot possibly be anything but liberated and called to action by her keen insight and enthusiasm for the Gospel of Our Lord, Jesus Christ."

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- RPO OFFERINGS** — "Carmen," in English, presented by the New York City Opera National Company, 8 p.m., Thursday, Feb. 3, Eastman Theater; Prom IV, featuring Jeff Tyzik, trumpet; Allen Vizzutti, trumpet; Isaiah Jackson, conductor, 8:30 p.m., Friday and Saturday, Feb. 4-5, at Dome Arena, Monroe County Fairground.
- CHEMICAL DEPENDENCY** — Free informational meeting for general public, sponsored by Park Ridge Chemical Dependency Program, 7:30 p.m., Monday, Feb. 7, 550 Latona Road in Greece.
- WORKSHOP** — The Women's Career Center is sponsoring a three-part series, "Exploring Career Alternatives For Teachers," 10:15 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., Sibleys Upstate Center in the downtown store. To register call the center at 325-2274 or 325-2275.
- SEMINAR** — Assemblyman Roger Robach and the Rochester Area

Chamber of Commerce are co-sponsoring a seminar on how to utilize The New York State Office of Business Permits, 7-9 p.m., Thursday, Feb. 17, in the large hall of the Chamber of Commerce Building.

SENIOR MATINEE — "Goodbye, Mr. Chips," starring Greer Garson and Robert Donat, 1:30 p.m., Thursday, Feb. 3, George Eastman House.

SPOTLIGHT TOUR — By Joan Baden, horticultural chairwoman of the Federation Garden Clubs of New York State, who will review flowers, grasses, trees and shrubs as depicted in painting and sculpture in the gallery collection, 2 p.m., Sunday, Feb. 6, Memorial Art Gallery. Free to members; free to non-members with gallery admission.

BARBERSHOP MUSIC — Presented by The Sweet Adelines and the Chorus of the Genesee, 7:30 p.m., Wednesday, Feb. 2, in the City Hall Atrium, 30 Church St. Free.

CHILDREN'S FILM — "Pippi in the South Seas," suggested for ages 5 to adult, 11 a.m. and 2 p.m., Saturday, Feb. 5, Nazareth College Arts Center. Tickets are \$.50 and will be on sale one hour before each performance.

CWU Institute

The 23rd annual Legislative Institute of Church Women United and the Committee of Women in Religion will be held 9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., Friday, Feb. 4, at Temple Beth David, 3200 St. Paul Blvd. A registration fee is \$1. The theme of the institute is "Women Working for Peace," and will include addresses by several diocesan, among them, Mary Heidkamp, director of the department of justice and peace, and Dan and Sheila Kinsky.

On Board

Sister Ann William Bradley, president of St. Mary's Hospital, and Peter Mott, MD, director of ambulatory services there, have been appointed by Gabriel Russo, county commissioner of human services, to serve on an advisory committee to MediCap, a county-wide project to contain escalating Medicaid costs. The project is funded through a Medicaid Competition Grant awarded the county by the office of Commissioner of Human Services last July.

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