

Pioneer

Continued from Page 7
to also offer high-school religious education. Between 180 and 200 students usually register for one of six seven-week mini-courses offered on weekday evenings each semester. Topics range from "Death and Dying" to "Peanuts, Popcorn and Prayer."

Classes for pre-school and kindergarten children are scheduled on Sundays during the 9:15 and 10:45 a.m. Masses.

Sacramental preparation is offered in conjunction with the regular religious-education program. Confirmation preparation, for instance, is the focus of regular religious education sessions for second-semester ninth graders and first-semester 10th graders. Preparation for other sacraments is handled largely by parents, who attend several training sessions on Saturdays, then work with their children at home.

The methods and curriculum Assumption's School of Religion employs with Annette Indovina's three children are a far cry from the kind of religious education she received years ago in a Catholic school. "I learned religion from the Baltimore Catechism," she recalled. "Nowadays, the curriculum is more directed toward everyday life situations. It's very family-oriented . . . as opposed to the questions and answers and the basic facts we learned. I'm sort of learning with my kids all over again."

Indovina believes that her children are more receptive to religious education when it is part of their school day.

Some other parents worry that their children could suffer academically from missing classroom time under the released-time arrangement. In most cases, public-school teachers avoid covering any new or significant material while Catholic students attend religion class.

Still other parents point out that traditional Catholic schools offer an entire curriculum that is faith-oriented, whereas Assumption's School of Religion offers religious education apart from other subjects for just one hour a week.

Assumption's School of Religion, however, operates on a fraction of the budget that would be required for an all-day school with a similar enrollment. Father John P. Norris, Assumption pastor, estimates that approximately 25 percent of the parish's total budget is spent

to support the School of Religion. In contrast, a growing number of parishes are struggling to meet diocesan education guidelines that stipulate that no more than 60 percent of a parish's budget ought to be devoted to a parish school.

Volunteers are responsible for the bulk of the savings at Assumption. Since the Mission Helpers of the Sacred Heart withdrew from Fairport in June, 1985, the School of Religion has employed two full-time and three part-time paid staff members. The staff, in turn, depends on 60 volunteer catechists and more than 70 additional parents who volunteer to type, answer telephones and help with mailings as well

as other special projects. Volunteer parents also ride Assumption's bus to supervise students and accompany the groups who walk to Baum Place for class.

Even for a parish of 1,800-2,000 families, enlisting more than 130 volunteers — many during the day — is a significant achievement.

Father Norris attributes the parish's success in attracting volunteers to the number of parents whom the School of Religion services. "It used to be that parents of the kids who went to public school were treated like second-class citizens. You had difficulty enlisting support from that group," he explained. "Here, even when 95 percent of the families send their chil-

dren to the public school, you still have the chance to appeal to that whole pool of interested parents."



DIOCESE OF ROCHESTER
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Bishop's Office

My dear brothers and sisters,
"Serve Together with Generosity and Forgiveness" — what an excellent way to describe the mission of those who participate in the catechetical ministry of the Church. It is, therefore, especially appropriate as the theme for the 1987 Catechetical Sunday celebration.

Catechetical Sunday in our diocese and throughout the United States will be celebrated on September 20. The theme flows from the readings for the day, in particular the Gospel parable of the workers in the vineyard. We see that God does not act as we do; God is infinitely generous and merciful beyond measure.

Each word of this theme speaks powerfully of a catechist's ministry. Foremost, these generous religious educators serve the Lord by being sensitive to God's Word and responsive to the gentle movements of the Spirit. The very nature of their vocation is one that calls for generosity, for an openness of heart and for compassion.

I am grateful to the more than 2,700 men and women who serve in catechetical ministry in the parishes and institutions of the Diocese of Rochester. Each one is vitally important in our efforts to enable people of all ages to grow more and more in the likeness of God, our God who is generous and forgiving.

I ask that you make a special effort to plan and carry out a Catechetical Sunday celebration that reflects your local community. I extend my personal thanks to all those who give themselves so generously to the task of sharing our faith. The Catechetical Sunday celebration is a special way to recognize and thank these people publicly, so that all our community is aware of the valuable ministry they share.

May the Lord bless you and your ministry as we serve together in generosity and forgiveness.

Your brother in Christ,

+ Matthew H. Clark
Bishop of Rochester

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General

Card of Thanks 2

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THANK YOU Sacred Heart of Jesus and St. Jude for favors received. A.L.B.
THANKS ALL saints, souls, Sacred Heart of Jesus, Mary, Our Lady of Perpetual Help, Sts. Joseph, Jude, Anthony, Jesus, Prague. F.B.C.

Employment

Help Wanted 14

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Music/Instruments 34

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