

DIOCESAN NEWS

Wisconsin catechist brings out adult creativity

By Kathleen Schwar
Staff writer

If you schedule a leading U.S. catechist to talk about adult catechesis, will they come?

Richard Reichert, catechetical consultant for the Diocese of Green Bay, Wis., hopes so.

Designated one of the top 25 catechists by *U.S. Catechist* magazine four years ago, Reichert will lead a workshop in Rochester for anyone involved in parish adult education. It is scheduled for 9:30 a.m.-3 p.m. March 16 at St. Thomas More Gathering Hall, 2617 East Ave., Rochester.

Reichert wants participants to "re-think" adult catechesis. His workshop will address the theme, "If We Build It Will They Come?"

The answer to that key question apparently depends on what the "it" is. Do we think of adult education as a lecture, program or study group? Or do we think that adult education can be carried out through a variety of approaches, including the Sunday liturgy?

"A common complaint, and it tends to be throughout the country, is that it is very difficult to attract adults to participate in a program at the parish level that involves adult education," Reichert said in a phone interview from the Diocese of Green Bay. "You get the same few people; it's like preaching to the choir, in a sense."

Adults are hardly afraid to go back to school, he said, pointing to the numbers in community colleges and other continuing education programs. Thus one question for religious educators to ask, he said, is, "Are we not imaginative or creative enough?"

Reichert is the first of several speakers the diocese plans to schedule in the near future, as a way to encourage creativity in

pursuing its No. 1 Synod goal of lifelong education, according to Karen Rinefield of the Faith Development Ministry. The diocese also plans to continue to issue packages of educational materials on selected issues for adult education — education that can be carried out by such means as parish discussion groups, but also by independent home study. The first packet was sent to parishes in November, the second in February.

"Green Bay is by and far the leader in adult education," Rinefield said. "But we are trying things they aren't even trying."

Materials in the diocesan packages recognize varied lifestyles and the busy-ness of parish staffs, she noted. They draw from and recommend numerous community resources. They suggest various media including audio and audiovisual, and writings that may be used, for example, as bulletin inserts as well as discussion guides.

Rinefield agrees with Reichert on many points, and says that it's time to "explode" the standard adult education program.

"We tend to think of one specific mod-

el: a lecture or program or study group, and people leave their homes to come focused on that," Reichert said. He added that we tend to judge success only in the numbers who come.

Reichert, who goes on the lecture circuit once or twice a month, said he isn't simply offering a new formula, but expects his audiences to talk things over and apply their own ideas.

He noted, however, one reason that adults have to be just as creative reaching each other as they are in preparing lessons for children.

"We have to be careful not to think of adults as a homogenous package," Reichert cautioned. "There is as much diversity as there is in children. A second grader isn't a fourth grader. Teenagers aren't junior high kids. Add to that, the sociology (occupations, for example) they are coming out of."

Reichert also noted that while parishes judge children's programs by evaluating the children, adult students "evaluate whether we are successful." Adults also often recognize themselves as experts and like to share their own expertise.

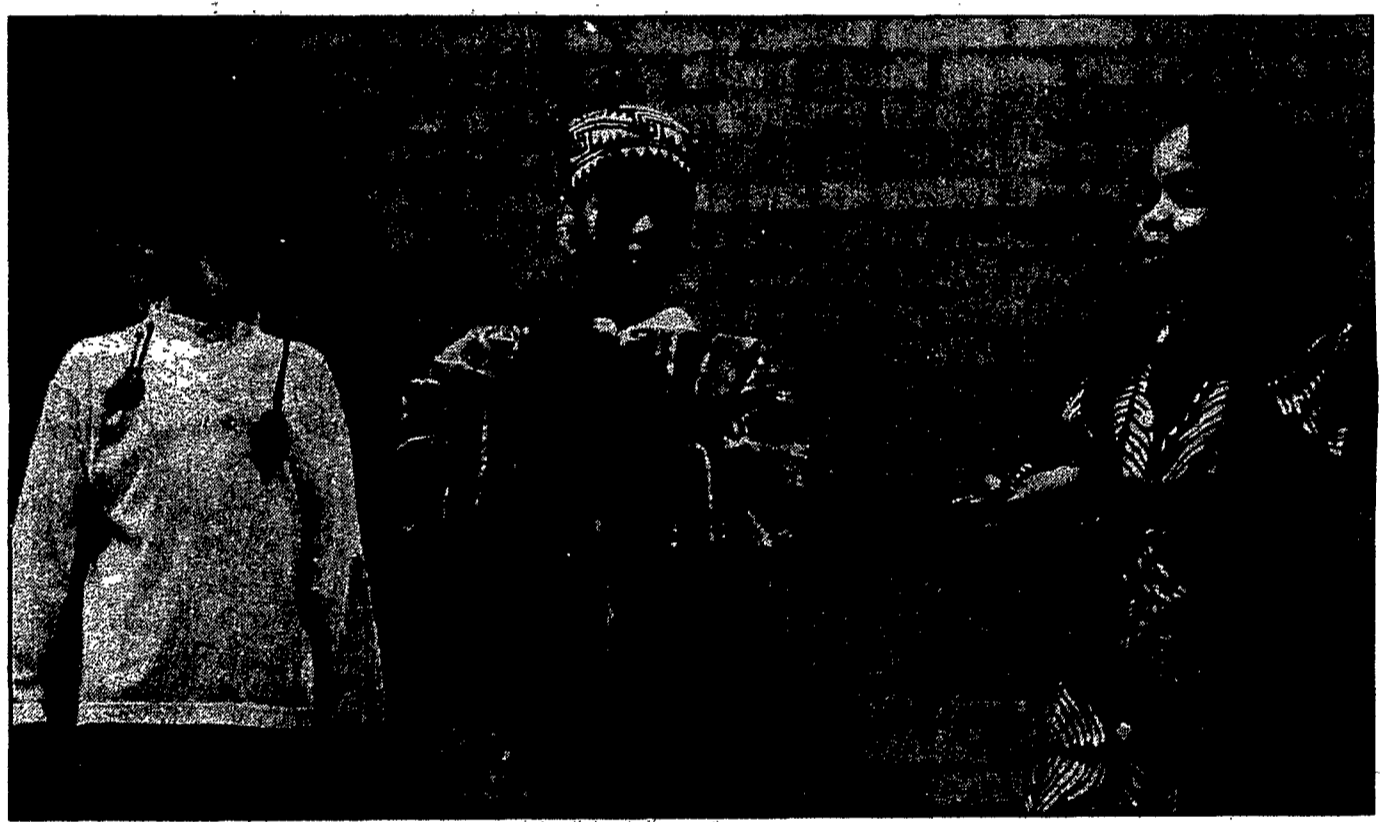
However, he said, a generally fail-safe topic for people of all ages is Scripture: "Old Testament, New Testament, the Gospels, Epistles, all of it." Another favorite topic is prayer, he added.

Much of Reichert's motivation these past 25 years in diocesan education is encouraging faith development. "If our faith is the same this year as last, we're not talking about faith," he said.

He cautioned, however, "Too often we are led to believe once we are in the church and established as members, it becomes a status thing and the task is to maintain. It's kind of holding our own instead of growing. It's keeping the rules, keeping the faith rather than growing in the faith."

"We have to understand our baptism has established us in a relationship of disciples with Jesus," he continued. "As disciples we don't deserve the title if we aren't committed to lifelong growth."

EDITORS' NOTE: Registration is required by Friday, March 15. Call Sylvia Mancuso at 328-3210, ext. 295, or 1-800-388-7177.



S. John Wilkin/Staff photographer

Black History Celebrated

Rochester's School No. 20 celebrated Black History Month March 5, with a performance of "The Eagles Who Thought They Were Chickens" by Diantha Joiner's third-grade class, a dance by Vai Medley and a dramatic presentation by Jacquelyn Dobson (right), director of the diocese's Office of Black Ministries. Above, Lorenzo Thomas (King) listens as Clerra Berry (Queen) talks to Jerrice Iverson (Eagle). Third- and fourth-grade students also presented an "I Have a Dream" medley based on Martin Luther King Jr.'s famous speech.



Rochester parish sells 'Shamrock Shirts' to raise funds for church

ROCHESTER — St. Bridget's Parish, 175 St. Bridget's Drive, is selling a variety of "Shamrock Shirts" to raise money for church programs and ministries.

Designed by Irish Catholics and worn by Ireland's parishes, the shirts feature a variety of primary colors and designs, including the American flag, the Irish flag, and the St. Patrick's Day shamrock. The shirts are available in sizes for men, women and children.

For more information, call 328-3210.

Naples church welcomes all Irish to celebration

NAPLES — Members of Rochester's Butler Academy of Traditional Irish Dancing will perform at 8 p.m. on March 15, at St. Patrick's Church, 160 N. Main St. The celebration will be part of the church's Feast of St. Patrick, which includes a corned beef and cabbage supper and a dance.

Tickets may be purchased in advance at Vermule's Appliance Store or the Naples Pharmacy, Main Street, on the night of the event at the church hall.

Tickets are \$8 each (\$15 for two) for dinner and the dance, and \$5 each for the dance only. For more information call Frans Jurgens at 716/396-9850.

TGA approaching \$4.8 million, says drive's director

By Rob Cullivan
Staff writer

The 1995-96 Diocesan Thanks Giving Appeal is on target to reach its \$4.8 million goal, according to Thomas D'Agostino, diocesan director of annual giving.

As of March 11, about \$4.05 million in actual monies had been collected from donors by the diocese, according to D'Agostino. He added that 57,000 donors had pledged \$4.7 million to the appeal so far.

D'Agostino pointed out that the rate of return of this year's TGA pledges is com-

parable to 1994-95, when the TGA reached its goal of \$4.6 million.

He added that the diocese was scheduled to wrap up within the next two weeks a phone campaign aimed at persons who had pledged during the TGA's parish phase last fall. He also said that 800 Catholics throughout the diocese had volunteered to help at various stages of the 1995-96 TGA.

"The parish volunteers did a really good job," D'Agostino commented. "The pastors got behind the appeal, too. That resulted in a lot more giving."

He concluded by noting that diocesan

Catholics can give to the TGA until June 30.

TGA funds are divided among various diocesan- and parish-level efforts to fulfill the diocesan Synod goals of developing lifelong faith formation, advocating for a consistent life ethic, recognizing the value and dignity of women in the church and society, and promoting the formation and growth of small Christian communities.

In addition to promoting synodal goals, TGA funds are used to support various parishes and individuals throughout the diocese, according to D'Agostino's office.

