

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

I am pleased with the initiative that has been undertaken to provide a resource for those involved in Religious Education for Persons With Special Needs.

You may find the information to be a valuable tool in meeting the needs of students either in a special education parish program or in implementing an inclusion paradigm.

The 1978 Pastoral Statement of U.S. Catholic Bishops on People with Disabilities continues to direct attention toward the need for expanded educational opportunities for children and adults with special needs. In addition, the diocese has policies to assist parishes to achieve this in *Faith Formation in the Diocese of Joliet*.

The General Directory for Catechesis (1997) continues to raise expectations of catechesis and persons with special needs. It states: A growth in social and ecclesial consciousness together with undeniable progress in specialized pedagogy, makes it possible for the family and other formative centers to provide adequate catechesis for these people (189)... Education in faith, calls for personalized and adequate programs (189).

It is the hope of those who developed this manual and myself that it can be an instrument to carry on the vision of these documents and eventually bring them to fulfillment.

Yours In Christ,