



ABOUT THE MOST REVEREND David L. Ricken



David Laurin Ricken was born on November 9, 1952, to George William “Bill” and Bertha (Davis) Ricken in Dodge City, Kansas, the second of three children, along with his brother, Mark, and sister, Carol.

Bishop Ricken attended Sacred Heart Cathedral Grade School in Dodge City and St. Francis Seminary High School in Victoria, Kansas. He began his college studies at the Pontifical College Josephinum in Worthington, Ohio, and graduated from Conception Seminary College in Conception, Missouri, in 1974 with a bachelor’s degree in philosophy. He continued his theological studies for the Diocese of Pueblo at St. Meinrad School of Theology in Indiana and at the Catholic University of Louvain in Belgium, where he earned a graduate degree in sacred theology and completed his seminary formation.

He was ordained a priest on September 12, 1980, by Bishop Arthur Tafoya of Pueblo at La Junta Catholic Parish in southeast Colorado. His first appointment was as associate pastor of the Cathedral of the Sacred Heart in Pueblo. Five years later, he was named administrator of Holy Rosary Parish in Pueblo and vice chancellor of the Diocese of Pueblo.

In 1987, then Father Ricken began studies at the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome, earning a Licentiate in Canon Law (J.C.L.) in 1989. Upon returning to the Diocese of Pueblo, he was appointed vocation director and vicar for ministry formation. Three years later, he also assumed the responsibilities of diocesan chancellor and assisted with the Diocesan Tribunal. He served in these positions until October 1, 1996, when he was appointed an official of the Congregation for the Clergy at the Vatican, where he served through December 1999.

On January 6, 2000, he was ordained to the episcopacy for the Diocese of Cheyenne at St. Peter’s Basilica in Rome by His Holiness, Pope St. John Paul II. The Mass of Welcome to the Diocese of Cheyenne was celebrated on February 11, 2000, in Cheyenne. On September 26, 2001, Bishop Ricken succeeded Bishop Joseph Hart as the seventh bishop of the Diocese of Cheyenne. During his tenure there, he was one of the founding members of Wyoming Catholic College.

Pope Benedict XVI named Bishop Ricken the twelfth bishop of the Diocese of Green Bay on July 9, 2008. He was installed as bishop on August 28, 2008, at St. Francis Xavier Cathedral in Green Bay.

During his years as bishop of Green Bay, Bishop Ricken has guided the faithful through a series of pastoral initiatives focused on catechesis, prayer, evangelization, discipleship, the Eucharist, missionary outreach, and, most recently, the Holy Spirit. Among these are:

2009 | A NEW MOMENT FOR CATECHESIS

In November 2009, Bishop Ricken issued the pastoral letter, *A New Moment for Catechesis in the Diocese of Green Bay*, emphasizing the *United States Catholic Catechism for Adults* and its role in faith formation and religious instruction throughout the diocese.



2010 | MARIAN APPARITION APPROVED

On December 8, 2010, Bishop Ricken issued the *Decree on the Authenticity of the Apparitions of 1859 at the Shrine of Our Lady of Good Help* in Champion, Wisconsin, to Adele Brice. With this decree, he became the first and, to date, only diocesan bishop in the United States to officially approve a Marian apparition.

2011 | LIVING JUSTICE

In 2011, Bishop Ricken issued a *Pastoral Statement on Living Justice in the Diocese of Green Bay*, calling for the establishment of a diocesan Commission on Living Justice to lead catechesis, planning and implementation of Catholic social teaching throughout the Diocese of Green Bay.

2011 | PARISHES: CALLED TO BE HOLY, FULLY ENGAGED, FULLY ALIVE

On June 12, 2011, the Solemnity of Pentecost, Bishop Ricken issued this pastoral letter outlining priorities for parishes and the diocese. By recognizing what is good and inspiring within parish communities, he challenged the faithful to imagine what their communities could become as they strive to be holy, fully engaged and fully alive.

2014 | TEACH MY PEOPLE TO PRAY

In August 2014, Bishop Ricken issued *Teach My People to Pray: Phase 1 – Formation in Prayer & Holiness (2014–16)* as preparation for the *Disciples on the Way* initiative. The reflection emphasized the nature of prayer and the call to become prayerful disciples, beginning with the bishop, priests, diocesan curia, deacons, pastoral leaders and pastoral ministers.

2014 | DISCIPLES ON THE WAY

In the fall of 2014, Bishop Ricken invited priests, deacons, religious, pastoral leaders and all the faithful to embark on a missionary journey into the New Evangelization through *Disciples on the Way: Holy, Engaged, Alive*. The initiative called the faithful not simply to do more, but to become more like Jesus through four stages of discipleship: *Discover Jesus, Follow Jesus, Worship Jesus* and *Share Jesus*.

2020 | YEAR OF PRAYER TO ST. JOSEPH

On February 11, 2020, the Feast of Our Lady of Lourdes and the 150th anniversary of St. Joseph's designation as Patron of the Universal Church, Bishop Ricken declared a special year of prayer in honor of St. Joseph. He asked that the *Prayer to St. Joseph* be prayed at Masses throughout the diocese beginning March 21-22, 2020.

2022 | ENCOUNTERING JESUS IN THE EUCHARIST

On the Feast of St. Augustine, August 28, 2022, Bishop Ricken issued the pastoral letter, *Encountering Jesus in the Eucharist: Disciples Called to Worship*. Coinciding with the National Eucharistic Revival initiated by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, the diocesan initiative called parishes to become increasingly centered on the Eucharist and invited the faithful to grow in devotion to God the Father and his beloved Son, Jesus Christ, through the power of the Holy Spirit.

2024 | HOLY COMMUNION UNDER BOTH KINDS

In 2024, Bishop Ricken issued pastoral instruction concerning the diocesan practice of receiving Holy Communion under both kinds. The instruction continued the diocese's focus on encountering Jesus in both the Word and the Eucharist and advanced the vision outlined in *Encountering Jesus in the Eucharist: Disciples Called to Worship*.



2025 | JUBILEE YEAR: PILGRIMS OF HOPE

On January 6, 2025, Bishop Ricken officially opened the Jubilee Year 2025 – *Pilgrims of Hope* at St. Francis Xavier Cathedral in Green Bay, in accordance with the guidance of His Holiness Pope Francis. He designated three sacred places of pilgrimage in the Diocese of Green Bay: St. Francis Xavier Cathedral in Green Bay, the National Shrine of Our Lady of Champion in Champion, and St. Pius X Parish in Appleton.

2026 | SENT ON MISSION

On January 11, 2026, the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord, Bishop Ricken issued *Sent on Mission: A Pastoral Invitation to Share Jesus with Others*. The pastoral invitation summarized more than a decade of diocesan discipleship and marked the transition into the *Share Jesus* years. Building upon the previous years of discovering, following and worshipping Jesus, the initiative calls every parishioner to four actions: invite the Holy Spirit into his or her life; reach out to those in need through the Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy; share Jesus with family, friends and neighbors through personal invitations; and seek the intercession of missionary saints, including Our Lady of Champion, St. Francis Xavier and St. Thérèse of Lisieux.

2026 | PATRONS OF THE SHARE JESUS YEARS

In 2026, Bishop Ricken issued *Patrons of the Share Jesus Years*, a resource accompanying *Sent on Mission: A Pastoral Invitation to Share Jesus with Others*. The resource highlights the lives and missionary witness of Our Lady of Champion, St. Francis Xavier and St. Thérèse of Lisieux.

2026 | CAUSE OF CANONIZATION FOR ADELE BRICE

On January 30, 2026, during Solemn Vespers at St. Francis Xavier Cathedral, Bishop Ricken formally opened the Cause of Canonization for Servant of God Adele Brice, coinciding with the 195th anniversary of her birth. Through a formal decree, he initiated the diocesan phase of examining her life, virtue and holiness. Adele Brice, a young Belgian woman, responded to the message of the Queen of Heaven with a life of faithfulness and service, teaching children the Sign of the Cross and their catechism and encouraging them to receive the sacraments worthily.

2026 | JUBILEE OBSERVANCE

On June 18, 2026, Bishop Ricken issued a decree for a jubilee observance calling the faithful to renew within their hearts a spirit of holiness, simplicity, peace and evangelical charity through the intercession of St. Francis of Assisi.

Bishop Ricken is a member of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops and serves on the Committee for Canonical Affairs and Church Governance. He is also a member of the Bishops' Advisory Council for the Institute for Priestly Formation and the Catholic Mutual Relief Society. In addition, he serves on the Board of Directors of Relevant Radio and on the board of the National Committee for a Human Life Amendment (NCHLA).

Previously, Bishop Ricken served as chairman of the USCCB Committee on Evangelization and Catechesis. He also served on the editorial oversight board for the National Directory of Catechesis and was a member of the USCCB Committees for Domestic Justice and Human Development, Home Missions and Pro-Life Activities. He represented his region on the Committee for the Protection of Children and Young People.

Bishop Ricken is past president of the National Catholic Rural Life Conference and a former chairman of the Committee on the American College of Louvain in Belgium. He was also appointed by the Vatican to serve as co-chair of the International Commission for Dialogue between the Disciples of Christ and the Catholic Church.