## Youth

# 'God talk' draws response from Brighton youth group

By Rob Cullivan

BRIGHTON — A little less than two years ago, Roxanne Salata's love life had turned sour, and she felt as if there wasn't much reason to live. The Brighton High School student, a sophomore at the time, was also preparing for the sacrament of confirmation, but by her own account, she was only going through the motions.

One of those motions was a weekend retreat all confirmation candidates were required to attend. At the retreat, Salata had some probing questions for her believing peers. She wanted to know who God was and why He was so important to them. She found her answer in the tremendous love for God they expressed and, particularly, in the happiness of one of her fellow retreat-goers. "She was such a good person because she had let God run her life, "Salata said.

Since then, Salata, now a senior, has let God run her life, part of which is spent as an active member of Our Lady of Lourdes Parish's youth group. The group, led by parish youth minister. Johan Engstrom, meets every Sunday evening for an hour-and-a-half of "prayer and share." Anywhere from 30 to 40 high school students turn up each week to discuss topics ranging from the spiritual to the practical, Engstrom

At the group's meeting on Sunday, Jan. 15, Salata, along with fellow Brighton senior Dave Maltz, led a discussion on the meaning of Christ's death. Such a topic might daunt teenagers more interested in lighter pursuits, but the group seemed to leap into the discussion as if Christ's crucifixion occupied their minds all the

"Did He have to die?" Maltz asked the students, their faces lit only by the three candles on the meeting room floor. The teenagers offered varied responses. One student said that he had been raised to believe Christ had to die to release the souls of the dead so that they could go to heaven. Tom Clay, a Hamilton College freshman on a return visit to the group, said the crucifixion proved Christ's tremendous love for those who tormented Him as He carried the

'If it were any of us, we would have dropped the cross right there and gone after them," Clay said. "He was God. He could've zapped them right there." The group laughed in response,

**Speaking Out** 

By Paul Hezel

DeSales High School

Christmas vacation ceased to exist at the be-

ginning of the new year. Sleeping late every

morning became a thing of the past. Gone was

the freedom from the pressures of daily assign-

ments. Vacation was but a short break from stu-

As though it was a way to celebrate the new

year, students were thrown back into the all-too

familiar classroom. Once again, they faced the

pressure to complete such everyday assign-

ments as reading 15 pages of history or studying

for a chemistry test the next day. School work

was balanced with some extracurricular activi-

ties such as sports, jobs and basketball game at-

Soon after the return to school comes the

dreaded midterm exams. Simply stated, midterms are a three-hour test in each subject on all

that we learned, failed to learn or forgot during the first half of the school year. Midterms can

be compared to visiting the dentist. There is a

dents' regular routine in school.

tendance.

but the tone was generally serious for the whole

Salata related Christ's sacrifice to her current studies. "We've been reading Sophocles," she said. "He talked about life and how you should live your life by doing what the gods do," she said, adding that death is eternal, so it is important to follow what God wants.

What God wants interested many of the students, who related accounts of sacrifice and giving in the own lives. One girl had volunteered at a cerebral palsy phone-a-thon to raise money for research, and another had visited elderly people in a nursing home.

When the discussion ended, the students joined hands to pray together. One girl petitioned God on behalf of a pregnant friend, and another prayed for her sister going to college. When they had finished praying, someone switched on the lights, and the students rose and embraced each other, talking loudly as if they had just eaten lunch in the school cafeteria.

Afterwards, Salata commented that the meeting had filled her with peace. Discussions focused on spiritual issues seemed to create the best response among the students, she said. While she admitted that discussing such issues as romantic relationships can be valuable, she thought the group benefited more when the focus is on God. "Whenever we have a Godtalk, everyone responds," Salata remarked.

Not all her high school friends respond to her faith as readily as the group did, but then she doesn't go around preaching. Her message is conveyed more subtly, she said. "Last week, I was sitting in Perkins (Restaurant) with a friend. I said, 'You don't think that I preach?'" The friend agreed that she didn't and even insisted that Salata had no influence on her moral

But Salata disagreed, pressing her friend to admit that when she went out to drink and party with others, she sometimes wondered whether Salata would approve of such behavior. "I said to her, 'Isn't that me and God influencing you?" Her friend had no response.

Regardless of whether she succeeds with her subtle message, Salata feels it is worth trying to bring others to God anyway. Referring to the youth group's meetings, she said, "When we do this every week, if just one person listens to it, then we've done our job.'

great deal of anxiety prior to a visit, but affinit is completed, it was not half as bad as pre

Throughout January teachers are constantly emphasizing how important it is to study for the exams. Because of the effect these exams have on report cards — desirable or undesirable as the case may be - we are constantly reminded of how few weeks, and then days, are left be-

Despite the warnings, we find every excuse not to study so that we have to cram most of the year's work into one night. It is logical to conclude that this is ineffective, but it happens

Perhaps the exams are not really a test of what has been learned during the year. Rather, they seem to be more of a test of how much can be remembered after a few hours of cramming. We probably would remember less than half the material if the same test was given a week later.

We can look at the middle of the school year from several different perspectives. Seniors have only half of a year remaining in their high school careers. Some will take the opportunity to improve on what they did or didn't do previously. Perhaps there is a sigh of relief in making it to the halfway point of yet another school year. Whatever way it is perceived, let's get the most we can out of this year.

### **Association plans dinner** to benefit blind children ...

The Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired of Greater Rochester, Inc., will present Chefs' Delight, a benefit dinner, on Jan. 30 at the Holiday Inn-Rochester South.

The evening will begin at 6:30 p.m. with a cash bar, followed at 7:30 by a dinner prepared by members of The A.C.F. Professional Chefs and Cooks Association of Rochester. It will include hors d'oeuvres and desserts.

Cost for the dinner is \$35 per person or \$350 for a table of ten, with the proceeds to benefit programs for blind and visually impaired chil-

For more information, call Kathy Langton at 716/232-1111. The deadline for reservations is January 19.

#### Workshop examines dreams

The SSJ Spirituality Institute is offering "Dreams: Vehicle of Spiritual Growth," a four-part workshop on understanding dreams, on Jan. 25, Feb. 8, 22, and March 8. Each session will take place at the Sisters of St. Joseph Motherhouse, 4095 East Ave., Rochester, from 1:30-3 p.m.

The four sessions will cover the topics "Why Do I Dream?" "How Do I Approach Dreams?" "What Do Dreams Reveal?" and "Dream-work." Participants will be introduced to understanding dream language and to the techniques of creative listening with

Cost for the series is \$5 per session. For more information, contact Sister Ann de Porres, SSJ, at 716/586-1000, ext. 68.



Roxanne Salata (right) reads a passage from the Gospel according to St. Luke to

members of Our Lady of Lourdes Parish youth group.

Aquinas Institute

## Why do you go to Catholic school?

## As Teens See It

#### DANA PARRINELLO, Sophomore

.. The reason I made the decision to attend a Catholic high school (was) due to my past experiences with public and Catholic education.

Aquinas gives me the

personal attention in areas where it is needed. It has given me a positive attitude toward a higher level of learning. There is more emphasis on structure than (in) other types of education, but I think it has made my learning and growth ex-periences during high school more memorable.

#### FINBAR BURKE, Sophomore

brother and sister had been attending one. I had been in Catholic schools for eight years prior to high school. When looking into

Catholic high schools during eighth grade, I saw fine education and excellent programs in college preparation. Also, the only place where od religion programs

ANN MARIE FEELEY, Sophomore

One reason is that my family is Catholic, so it pleased my parents to see me going to Aquinas. I also compared Aquinas to the other schools that were

available to me, and it seemed a lot more ap-. At a Catholic school, it seems that the teachers and students associate in a more personal

way, and more attention can be given to the stu-

#### CHRISTINA MANCINI, Junior

I have gone to a Catholic school since grade three, so I knew that I would feel right at home. There are fewer kids than at a public school, so the groups

tend to be olosely knit. The student body seems

to be one group of friends. Theology classes are another thing that I like

about Catholic schools. I feel that it is important to have some background in my religion, and I enjoy the rap sessions that we often have.

#### SAM OGNIBENE, Junior

I chose Aquinas because my dad is an alumnus, and also because it is a school that has a long-standing tradition of high standards spiritual growth.



## **HOUSE OF GUITARS**

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We received 11 correct entries identifying Irving Berlin as the composer of "God Bless



The winner was Paul Brewster of Hornell

### MUSIC

#### This week's question:

Who was the lead singer for Blondie?

School

#### Rules:

Each week, the Courier-Journal, in conjunction with the House of Guitars will feature a Music Trivia contest. All you have to do to enter is answer the question, fill in your name and address and the school you attend (if applicable), cut out the coupon, and send it in to the Courier-Journal. If more than one correct entry is received,

a drawing will be held and one winning entry will be drawn.

If yours is the winning entry, you will be mailed a coupon for a free album or tape of your choice redeemable at the House of Guitars, 645 Titus Ave.

All entries must be received within seven days of this papers issue date. Winning names and answers will be printed the week following each drawing.

#### The Courier-Journal Music Trivia

1150 Buffalo Rd. Rochester, N.Y. 14624