



Illustration by Henry Besanceney

**By Barbara Ann Homick**  
Staff writer

Although her brother's fatal car accident occurred almost two decades ago, Jeannette Berretta said she still hasn't recovered completely from the loss. In fact, she remarked, most people never really get over the grief of losing a loved one.

"You might get scar tissue over the wound,

stab to me," recalled Berretta, a member of both St. Mary's Parish and the Wounded Healers' Bereavement Support Group in Auburn. "I felt like God was saying, 'I can't let you get too comfortable; you need a thorn.'"

Anger — whether at God or at the cause of a loved one's death — is a common reaction among the bereaved. Even Lazarus' sister

"People need permission to grieve. It doesn't oppose their faith," explained Father Farrell, who has served at St. Joseph's for four years. "People should allow their feelings to surface naturally, and acceptance will usually follow."

Although the journey was not an easy one, Margaret Bartlett believes she has reached such a point of acceptance.

Only two years after Bartlett's father died in 1977, her 25-year-old brother, Daniel, died in a car accident. Margaret Bartlett was only 21 at the time. Six years later, another car crash took the life of her 23-year-old brother, Matthew.

Danny's death caused Bartlett to withdraw somewhat from life. But after Matt died, her withdrawal was nearly complete.

"I didn't want to deal with my family anymore because there was so much pain," explained Bartlett, who was living in New York City after Matt died.

"I was also very, very, angry at God," she added. "I thought, 'Why don't you just take us all and get it over with?'"

The 33-year-old business librarian recalled

**Continued on page 16**

# Grief fuels anger, faith

but you still have the scar," the 34-year-old Seneca Falls native observed. "It is like a gaping hole that crusts over, but it may break open and ooze a little now and then."

Even so, for the first seven years after her brother's death, anger kept Berretta from shedding a single tear.

"I didn't cry because I was angry at God. I had just established a great relationship with my brother, so I took his death as a personal

Martha seemed to resent Jesus for failing to be with her at the time of her brother's death.

But like Martha, who also professed her faith in Jesus' life-giving power, modern-day mourners need to resolve their anger. Releasing rage during the grieving process helps the bereaved to reach a point of acceptance and begin the healing process, according to Father Richard T. Farrell, director of pastoral care at St. Joseph's Hospital in Elmira.