

Catholics vow to improve their bodies, souls in New Year

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knowledge Jan. 2 that she was planning to attend Mass on the first Saturday of every month.

"I haven't done it before," Bittner said, "(and) I can't go first Fridays."

A parishioner at Our Lady of Perpetual Help in Rochester, Bittner said she wanted to take up the First Saturday practice "because I feel like I get closer to God by going to Mass."

Moments before the *Courier's* copy deadline on Monday, Jan. 6, Bittner confessed, however, that she had missed Mass on Saturday, Jan. 4. When asked why, she sheepishly replied: "The truth? I overslept."

Despite her failure to overcome human weakness, Bittner would find sympathy — not condemnation — in the 1992 objective of Mike Latona, a *Courier* staff writer.

"My special resolution is ... to continue to be more patient and understanding of others," Latona said, noting that he had begun working on this goal back in early 1991. "Instead of kicking off something new, I'm trying to move ahead on a resolution I've already made," he concluded.

Moving the survey into the halls and offices of the Diocesan Pastoral Center, the *Courier* focused on Anne Paluskiewicz, associate director for human sexuality in the Department of Youth Ministry.

Paluskiewicz said her only hope for 1992 was to have a "healthy baby." Due to possibly give birth on April 5 of this year, Paluskiewicz, opined that trying to predict accurately a child's birthdate is like trying to "control the uncontrollable."

Bringing procrastination under control moved Jacquelyn Dobson, director of the Office of Black Ministries, to resolve to stop putting things off till the last minute.

To bolster her contention that she would go stick to that resolution, Dobson noted that on Friday, Jan. 3, she had handed a listing of her office's 1992 activities and programs to Elizabeth Maldonado, bilingual secretary for the Office of the Spanish Apostolate. Grinning broadly, Dobson observed that the listing was actually due on Tuesday, Jan. 7.

Maldonado, who shares a work area with Dobson, agreed that the director

was making a sincere effort to end her procrastination. As for herself, Maldonado said that in 1992 she wants to devote more of her time to God by going to church more often.

Speaking of a spiritual hunger that compelled her resolution, the secretary asked rhetorically: "It's just a basic emptiness inside that you have to fill, and who can be better than God?"

God was very much on the minds of many of those who agreed to answer the *Courier* poll. Like Bittner and Maldonado, several wanted to dedicate more time in their lives specifically for the Lord, or to continue prayer and meditative practices that have pro-

her teachers by meeting with them in the early moments of the school day.

Even earlier in the day, Pitrella wants to attend the parish's daily Mass at 6:45 a.m.

"It's a good way to begin your day," she said. "You take this time out to say, 'This day was given to me by God and I want to recognize that fact.'"

Pitrella also hopes her friends will recognize a different woman by year's end — a woman about 20 pounds lighter. To that end, she plans to enroll in an area diet workshop, she said.

Although he could make as many resolutions as Pitrella, Ralph Barbalace, a parishioner at St. Francis Church in

the Knights of Columbus, Niziurski said he has closely followed reports of alleged Marian apparitions in Medjugorje, Yugoslavia.

"Mary, in her various appearances, has always asked her children to pray the rosary for world peace and to end abortion," he noted.

Obtaining for parents the legal right to know whether their underage daughter is going to have an abortion will be one of Linda Zaleski's goals for 1992. As president of the diocesan chapter of the Federation of Catholic School Parents, Zaleski plans to lobby the state Legislature for a parental-consent bill that would require notification of parents when a minor daughter sought an abortion.

On the other end of the spectrum of problem pregnancy, Zaleski also hopes to devote time this year to working one-on-one with teenagers who are pregnant.

"I need to extend myself past my own front door and help people in need," she said.

Victoria Dutton, bookkeeper at St. Columba/St. Patrick's in Caledonia, echoed Zaleski's interest in youths, but pointed out that her primary concern lies with her own two teenagers as well as her 10 year old.

"I think (I want) to really try to listen to them — what they're saying, rather than trying to tell them," she said.

On the other hand, some diocesan Catholics hope to avoid involvement in weighty concerns in 1992. Phillip J. Lioi, organist at St. Mary's in Rochester, hopes to stay out of debates on church problems this year.

"I hereby resolve to stay out of parish politics because it's just so nice to play the organ, and that's it!" he said with a laugh.

EDITORS' NOTE — According to Mary Bittner, staff writer Rob Cullivan has resolved to submit his weekly time card by noon each Monday of 1992. But Cullivan warned that the springtime shift to daylight-saving time may affect his resolve.

1992 RESOLUTIONS

vided them spiritual nourishment.

St. John Fisher's William Pickett restated his resolve to meditate 20 minutes every day. As part of the practice, the college president repeats a prayer of the Lakota Sioux: "Mitakoye oyasin," which translates to "All is related," he said.

"I think it helped me keep things in balance and perspective," Pickett observed of meditation. "I had a good year (in 1991). I feel good about myself. This had something to do with it, I guess."

Another educational administrator, Charlotte Pitrella, principal of St. Michael's School in Newark, also hopes to balance her life better in 1992. Pitrella made three resolutions this year — to arrive earlier at work and to develop her spirituality, all while losing weight.

Pitrella normally gets to school by 8:15 a.m., but said she wants to move that arrival time up by one half-hour. She noted that she could better serve

Phelps, said a difficult situation in his personal life will cause him to focus primarily on going to church again on a weekly basis. He admitted straying somewhat from the Mass attendance in 1991, yet he now hopes to re-energize his faith by attending regularly and becoming more active at his parish.

Although she has kept close to the church, Sandy Huhn, 57, director of music at St. Francis Solanus in Interlaken, acknowledged leaving formal prayer behind for most of her adult life. She said she talks to God in an informal way each day, but that as she has grown older, she has wanted to start regularly saying the Lord's Prayer and other common meditations.

"This is something you're supposed to do," she remarked.

Listening to the guidance of the Blessed Virgin Mary motivated Hilton's John J. Niziurski to resolve to say more rosaries and attend Mass more often. The Grand Knight of Council 9461 of

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