

# Bishop's Day skit incites wave of emotions

By Mike Latona  
Staff writer

ROCHESTER — It was difficult to determine which was more heart-rending: the seven-minute skit, or the 45-minute discussion that followed.

Emotion flowed from all parts of the congregation during Bishop's Day with Youth as a result of the "Turnaround" performance by the youth group at Church of the Assumption, 20 East Ave., Fairport.

The skit was part of the ninth annual Bishop's Day with Youth, which drew 800 participants this past Sunday, May 3, to the Rochester Riverside Convention Center, 123 E. Main St.

The vignette focuses on a teenage girl, played by Jennifer Overbeck, who gradually becomes surrounded by negative influences in her life. One by one, other Assumption teens — dressed in black and wearing signs such as "alcohol," "anger," "lies," "sex" and "depression" — embrace her and draw her further down the path to destruction. The final "person" Overbeck hugs is "suicide."

At that point, all the people in black begin swirling rapidly around her. Overbeck's old friends, dressed in white, are unable to break into the circle to save her. Finally, she screams out for Jesus. At that point "Jesus" appears, penetrates the circle and rescues Overbeck.

Bonnie Tyler's haunting 1983 hit



In "Turnaround," a skit presented during the May 3 Bishop's Day with Youth, Jennifer Overbeck plays a teenager who becomes surrounded by negative influences in her life.

Kellie McCann/Photo Intern

single, *Total Eclipse of the Heart*, played throughout the skit to enhance the tense atmosphere.

"It was very powerful. I appreciate you stirring me up inside as you did," Bishop Matthew H. Clark told the Assumption group as he took the stage following the play's conclusion.

During the question-and-answer session moderated by Bishop Clark, diocesan youth group members spoke — often fighting back tears — of the skit's true-to-life representation.

"I feel bad for the youth of today because these (pressures and influences) are things you have to deal with every day," said Yolanda Vargas, a youth group coordinator at Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church, 53 Ontario St., Rochester. "But there is a God. Find him; reach for him. He's there."

Vargas later told the *Catholic Courier*, "I'm a substitute teacher (in the City of Rochester) and I see these things. It's sad that it has to happen."

Youths stood up and talked of struggles they, or their friends, have had with depression, sexual abuse and violence. When Bishop Clark asked for suggestions on how to deal with a friend who becomes a victim to such problems, the answers included lending an open ear, offering a hug, giving advice and seeking professional help for that friend.

Many said that trusting in Jesus is the best way.

"Our main goal was to touch at least one person in the audience. To touch so many people who say that Jesus is the solution makes me feel good," Overbeck said.

"One thing I was pleased with is that people are saying this is something that actually exists, not something we made up," commented Ned Wolf, who portrayed Jesus.

Overbeck noted that the experience

was just as moving for the performers as for those who watched. "The person who played 'suicide' is a close friend of mine, and it was scary when I went to hug him," she said.

"Every time I do (the skit), I get shivers," added Erin Driscoll, who portrayed "sex."

The performance featured about half of Assumption's 50-member youth group. According to Youth Minister Marie Claus, the group decided it wanted to do this particular sketch for Bishop's Day after witnessing a similar performance last summer at a youth conference in Steubenville, Ohio.

"We were very moved. The issues of drugs and alcohol are very close to all of us — adults as well as children," said Claus, who added that her group prayed before every rehearsal "because it's the type of dramatization that's going to touch a lot of people."



Bishop Clark listens to the comments of diocesan youths during a question-and-answer session that followed the skit.

## Benefit concert is May 16 in Nazareth Academy aud

ROCHESTER — Nazareth Academy will present "Together for Christie," a benefit dance concert for leukemia patient Christie Simonetti, on Saturday, May 16.

The concert will begin at 4 p.m. at Nazareth's auditorium, 1001 Lake Ave.

The fundraiser's organizer is faculty member Pamela Schickler, who also teaches at A Touch of Dance Studio — where the 7-year Greece resident has been a student.

A donation of \$4 per ticket is suggested. All proceeds will go directly to the Simonetti family. For information, call Nazareth at 716/458-8583.

## Kearney performers set to present Damn Yankees

IRONDEQUOIT — Bishop Kearney High School will present the musical *Damn Yankees* from May 15-17 in the school auditorium, 125 Kings Hwy. S.

The show is scheduled for 8 p.m. May 15 and 16, and 2 p.m. May 17.

Tickets, which will be available at the door, cost \$7 for adults and \$5 for students and senior citizens.

Directed by Bob Smyth, the play has a cast of 45 Kearney performers.

For ticket information, contact Smyth at 716/342-4000 or 482-2099.

## Applications available for Rotary Sunshine Camp

RUSH — Applications are currently being accepted at the Sunshine Camp for Physically Challenged Children, located at 809 Five Points Road.

The camp, free to all children who attend, is open to youths with various illnesses — such as asthma, cerebral palsy, diabetes, muscular dystrophy, multiple sclerosis and epilepsy — or who may have been injured in accidents.

Parents or guardians may write or call the camp at 716/533-2080.

## YOUTH BRIEFS



### Camp EAGR accepting registration for summer

Registration is now open for Camp EAGR, a one-week residential camp for boys and girls, ages 8 to 15, who have epilepsy.

This year's Camp EAGR (Epilepsy Association of Greater Rochester) will take place Aug. 23-29 at Camp Weona, located near Warsaw, N.Y.

For information, call the Epilepsy Association at 716/334-6400.

### Author to be main speaker at commencement Sunday

PITTSFORD — Jonathan Kozol, a nationally known author, educator and political activist, will deliver the main address at Nazareth College's 65th annual commencement, which will take place at the college, 4245 East Ave., at noon this Sunday, May 10.

Kozol, whose speech is titled "Savage Inequalities," will receive an honorary doctorate degree from Nazareth. Honorary degrees will also be conferred upon longtime college supporters and Board of Trustees members, Gerald G. Wilmot and Theodore Zornow, as well as Sister Louise Weber, SSJ, who has served Nazareth for more than 30 years.

Kozol was presented with the 1968 National Book Award for his best-selling book, *Death at an Early Age*, which chronicles his experiences teaching fourth-graders at an inner-city public school in Boston.

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