

Mass places emphasis on youth spirit

By Mike Latona
Staff writer

PENFIELD — Lately, there's been a lot more spirit at this church than in just the parish title.

A colossal All Saints' Day Mass at Holy Spirit Church, 1355 Hatch Road, drew an overwhelming response from this parish located near the town border of Penfield and Webster. An overflow throng of approximately 500 parishioners attended the 10:30 a.m. Mass, compared to the usual figure of 150 for that service.

The first of its kind at Holy Spirit, the family Mass emphasized participation from students in the parish's School of Religion.

"There were more people for this Mass than there usually are at Christmas or Easter," observed Julie Ruggiero, an eighth-grade religious education instructor at Holy Spirit.

"The kids really responded to this. It's something they will remember and hold onto," remarked Sister Lucille Nalbone, MPF, the first-year religious education coordinator at Holy Spirit.

Upon entering the church, parishioners were greeted by the sight of numerous decorations. Children in grades 1-3 prepared balloons, while



Eighth-grader Jamie Bunce talks about St. Francis during a homily entitled 'Blessed Are The Saints.' He and eight teens dressed as saints for the occasion.

youths in grades 4-6 designed reproductions of seven different saints. The reproductions were inserted over the parish's stained-glass windows.

The Mass itself began with introductions and readings performed by parish youths. In addition, a group of third-graders joined the adult choir for the entrance song, "Great Things Happen."

The service's focal point was the homily, during which seventh- and eighth-graders dressed up as saints such as St. Francis, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, St. Joseph and St. Bridget. Each youth then provided the congregation with background information about the saints. The youths explained how Saints were living example of the Bea-



Third-grade students join the adult choir for the entrance song, 'Great Things Happen,' during the All Saints' Day Mass at Holy Spirit Church in Penfield. The first of its kind at Holy Spirit, the family Mass emphasized participation from students in the parish's School of Religion.

Babette G. Augustin/Photo editor



Sister Lucille Nalbone, MPF, (right), a religious education coordinator at Holy Spirit, shares an embrace after Mass with Kathleen Mauldin who made all of the saints' costumes.

titudes, which are quoted during the Gospel reading every All Saints' Day.

According to Ruggiero, participation in the homily was especially crucial for the older Holy Spirit youths who are now preparing for confirmation.

"Most of their curriculum now is about making choices and living the Beatitudes. So we thought the saints would be good role models," she said.

"There's a real problem where chil-

dren, once they've made their confirmation, feel that they're done (with church involvement). Here we're trying to get them to continue participating," Ruggiero added.

Sister Nalbone, who began working at Holy Spirit this past September, agreed. "There is life after confirmation. That's what my thrust is," she emphasized.

"We're trying to teach our children to minister. They need to experience their religion, not just sit back with questions and answers," added Sister Nalbone, who initiated the idea for this Mass and oversaw its preparation.

A native Rochesterian, the 59-year-old Sister Nalbone came to Holy Spirit from Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church in Schenectady. Her order of sisters, Religious Teachers Filippini, is dedicated to Christian education of youth.

Sister Nalbone commented that she'd like to plan further events that would put the spotlight on Holy Spirit's youth community.

"I wasn't too sure what the reaction would be to this Mass, but it was a real big breakthrough," she said. "So I don't want this to be a one-shot deal. I want it to happen again and again, during the Advent season and into the new year."

Twelve-year-old Tom Jagla, who introduced the "saints" during the Nov. 1 homily, shared Sister Nalbone's enthusiasm.

"They should do this a little more often. It brings everyone together; all the families were there," remarked Jagla, a seventh-grader who attends Webster Junior High School.

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Kids' Chronicle Answer Key

1. Jacob
2. David
3. Joseph
4. Rahab
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7. Jesus Christ

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Eddie Rabbit as the recording artist of the 1981 #1 song,
/ Love A Rainy Night.

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