

# Troupe brings Way of the Cross alive in Tier

By Mike Latona  
Staff writer

APALACHIN — Elizabeth Boze has already played a large number of roles in her life, and her plans to further pursue acting in college should guarantee many more interesting parts.

But the 17-year-old Boze knows that nothing ever has — or ever will — quite match the exhilarating experience she and other cast members enjoy from the current production in which she's "starring."

Boze's youth group at St. Margaret Mary Church, 1110 Pennsylvania Ave., is carrying on a special Southern Tier tradition. For the past 17 years, a large contingent of St. Margaret Mary teenagers has performed Living Stations at different venues around the Tier.

Nearly 50 youths gathered on Fridays during Lent to perform Living Stations in such places as Hornell, Endicott and Conklin, N.Y. This level of commitment is exceptional in comparison to many other Living Stations groups that usually present one performance during Holy Week.

St. Margaret Mary's 1993 "tour" will conclude on Good Friday, April 9, when the Way of the Cross is presented at St. Patrick's Church, 300 Main St., Owego.

The Apalachin group was founded by Father Elmer Schmidt, who now serves as pastor of St. Ann Church in Hornell. Over the years, the number of participants has steadily grown, according to Jan Borromei, youth minister at St. Margaret Mary.

"It just mushroomed," said Borromei. "Now they talk about it months ahead of time."

"We have a lot of fun," added Boze, a senior at Vestal High School.

"There are kids who don't do any-

thing else all year (in their youth group) except stations. I honestly don't know what it is that clicks in," remarked Sandy Smith, one of the program's adult coordinators.

Smith added that the appeal has spread to teens of other faiths. "Their friends bring them along, and we find a place for them," she said.

As is the case with virtually all Living Stations, a reenactment of Jesus Christ's suffering proves to be a gripping experience for both the Apalachin contingent and its audiences.

"You have to put yourself in (Christ's) place and show what he went through. For the people watching, to them you *are* Christ," observed Tim Rupright, who plays Christ.

"By the time I finish, emotionally I have nothing left," added the 17-year-old Vestal High senior, who has participated in Living Stations since he was in eighth grade.

Rupright noted that "the people come up and say, 'That was beautiful; it made me cry.' I think what gets them is that kids are doing this; it's something that adults might not have thought we were capable of."

Boze, who portrays the Virgin Mary, said that her role has left her with a deeper appreciation of Mary's distress.

"This gives you a lot more understanding," said Boze, who is finishing her fourth year in the stations' performance. "You understand the feeling of Mary having to watch her son die."

These productions are not limited to youth involvement, noted Smith, who has assisted the group for about 10 years along with her husband, Ken.

"There are several adults, and they're more than just drivers. They help with the stage effects, the lighting and the sound effects, which are all very complicated," Smith said.



Ruth Adams/Photo Intern  
Tim Rupright portrayed Christ during his youth group's March 26 performance of the Living Stations of the Cross at St. Casimir Church in Endicott. Youths from Apalachin's St. Margaret Mary Church have performed the stations at different venues around the Southern Tier for the past 17 years.

## Groups schedule performances of Living Stations

Two diocesan parishes have notified the *Catholic Courier* of Living Stations to be presented by their youth groups on Good Friday.

• Christ the King Church, 445 Kings Hwy. S., Irondequoit, will hold its Living Stations at 8 p.m.

• Our Lady of Lourdes Church, 1100 W. Church St., Elmira, has scheduled its Living Stations for 7:30 p.m. This presentation will also include youths from the First Presbyterian Church in Elmira.

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