

Youth puts words into action through participation

Gates parishioner thrives on meetings

By Mike Latona
Staff writer

If you're a skeptic who thinks synod discussions have been talk and no action, Doug Doyle will be glad to set you straight.

The 19-year-old Doyle has been an adamant supporter of youth causes during parish synod meetings at St. Helen Church, 310 Hinchey Road, Gates. Already, he notes, his ideas have resulted in positive action.

"The big thing was getting a youth coordinator," said Doyle. "And we got one in July." (The parish hired Kathy Fuchs, who served as youth minister at St. Stephen's Church in Geneva prior to her arrival at St. Helen's.)

Doyle noted that the parish council, of which he is the youngest member, unanimously approved hiring a part-time youth minister.

"The people were very supportive," Doyle said. "They said the kids are the future of the church."

Although much younger than the average synod participant, Doyle is pleased that he is treated as an equal at these parish meetings.

"My word was heard; it wasn't put down or anything. The biggest thing was that I, at my age, was able to contribute and be heard," Doyle commented.

Doyle not only attended parish synod sessions this past fall and



S. John Wilkin/Staff photographer
Doug Doyle was outspoken on youth issues during the 1993 parish synod sessions at St. Helen Church in Gates.

spring, but he was also St. Helen's youth representative at both regional synods. Coincidentally, these gatherings for Monroe County's southwest region, held in December 1992 and May 1993, took place right at St. Helen's.

"The thing I really like about the Regional Synods was seeing youths from other parishes who are interested in the church. I have a lot of friends, but the church isn't a part of their lives," Doyle remarked.

He noted that young Catholics' needs were a key concern among the parishes in his region. Among the 46 different issues raised at the southwest regional synod, the No. 2 priority was making available a parish youth-ministry coordinator.

Doyle will be again be busy with synod duties this weekend as he participates in the General Synod at the Rochester Riverside Convention Center, 123 E. Main St. He's looking forward to solidifying all the recommendations that have emerged from the yearlong synod process.

"It's been a long time since it all began," Doyle acknowledged. "In the beginning, a lot of people didn't come because they didn't think it was going to be that interesting. But either changes are already happening, or they're going to happen. (Organizers) said right at the beginning that this is no joking matter; everything would be taken seriously."

Doyle, a Gates-Chili High School graduate, is entering his sophomore year at Monroe Community College. He studies business administration and carries a 3.65 grade-point average.

His face has been a familiar one for many years around St. Helen's. Along with his synod duties, Doyle has worked in the rectory office since 1988. In addition, he was also an altar server for seven years prior to that.

Doyle is hoping that, through the synod process, youths will be motivated to become as active in their parishes as he's been at St. Helen's.

"I'd like to see them getting more interested in the church. A lot of them think it's just praying; they don't think that it can be fun, too," he remarked. "I wish people would get it in their heads that it's not serious all the time. It's more than that."



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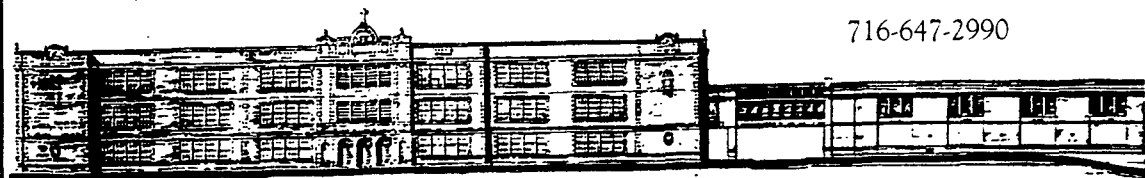


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