

Quake victims receive long-distance support

Elmira schools hold fundraiser

By Mike Latona
Staff writer

ELMIRA — Responding to people in need is a trait that can be developed at any age, as students at Holy Family Primary and Intermediate Schools have proven.

The youths' assistance has extended 3,000 miles to southern California, where residents are still struggling to recover from January's devastating earthquake.

Their effort began when Sister Deanna Gears, SSJ, who serves as chaplain at the primary school (pre-K through third grade) and intermediate school (grades 4-6), learned of a Catholic parish in Canoga Park, Calif., which had been particularly ravaged.

Most of the parishioners at St. Joseph the Worker Church are low-income residents, and the quake had forced approximately 200 of them to take up shelter on the church's parking lot.

Sister Gears presented the Californians' plight to the Holy Family students, and they responded with a passion. Primary-school students held a weeklong bake sale with cookies made by their parents, and intermediate-school youths conducted a raffle over the same period.

The Holy Family fifth-grade class exerted some exceptionally strong effort: teacher Dorene Rosplock donated the raffle prizes, and her students canvassed other classrooms selling raffle tickets.

Proceeds from the cookie sale and raffle totaled \$246, and the money has now been sent on to California along with photographs of the students' fundraising activities.

In return, the school recently received a thank-you letter from St. Joseph the Worker, as well as photos revealing the quake's consequences: bent pipes on the church organ, and parishioners still maintaining temporary homes on the parking lot.

Sister Gears noted that, along with what they had seen and heard through news reports, pupils at both schools had been made aware of the earthquake during daily school prayer.

Yet she noted that the stirring photographs from the California church had a particularly strong effect on the students.

"They can see that it's real people they're giving their money to," Sister Gears remarked.

"I felt very sorry for them. They didn't do anything, and all of a sudden their houses were devastated," remarked Michael Alderfer, a fifth-grader at Holy Family Intermediate School, 301 Demarest Parkway.

"It's terrible," agreed Danielle Erway, another fifth-grader. "All their homes were taken away from them, and they have no place to live."

Two years ago, Holy Family Catholic Schools had conducted a similar relief effort in response to victims of Hurricane Andrew. The primary and intermediate students, and well as middle-school youths in grades 7-8, sent cash and paperback school books to a Catholic school in Florida. They also collected and mailed books to a public school in Louisiana.

EDITORS' NOTE: Sister Gears emphasized that the California parish is still in need of earthquake-relief funding. Those who wish to provide assistance should send checks to Father James C. Gehl, pastor, St. Joseph the Worker Church, 19808 Cantlay St., Canoga Park, Calif., 91306.

Aquinas mock trial team places second in county

ROCHESTER — A team from Aquinas Institute recently placed second in the Monroe County Mock Trial competition.

Aquinas won three preliminary rounds in the 20-school competition to advance to the final round, held at the Hall of Justice against eventual champion Pittsford Sutherland.

Team members were seniors April Baker, Kellie Gauvin and Bob Murphy, and juniors T.J. Grab, Jason Hasert, Christa Muratore, Liz Ortolani and Ashleigh Turner.

Gene Oberst, chairman of the Aquinas social studies department, served as team moderator. Lawyer advisers included Gaetano Montalbano of the DiMarco and Riley firm, and Aquinas alumnus John D'Arpino.

Bringing stations to life



Photos by

S. John Wilkin

Staff photographer

The youth group from Christ the King Parish in Irondequoit visited the Sisters of St. Joseph Motherhouse on March 27, when they performed the Stations of the Cross in the chapel. (Top) Adam Fisher stands guard as the shadow of the crucified body of 'Jesus' is cast on the wall. (Above) 'Jesus,' portrayed by Damian Schmidt, carries his cross past a sobbing women.

BK debate squad captures national qualifying event

IRONDEQUOIT — The forensics team from Bishop Kearney High School took first place at the Upstate New York National Qualifying Tournament, held March 12 in Utica.

This marks the second consecutive year that Kearney has captured this debating event. Individual category honors were won by: senior Brian Gallagher and sophomore Erika Castner, first place

in Team Debate; senior Michael Johnson, second place, Extemporaneous Speaking; junior Elizabeth DeMatteis, second place, Original Oratory; junior David Jones, third place, Lincoln-Douglas Debate; and freshman Andrea Holland, third place, Humorous Interpretation.

BK now moves on to the national tournament, to be held June 19-24 in Kansas City, Mo.

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