

YOUTH FEATURE

EXTRA CREDIT

Recent Bishop Kearney High School graduates **Todd Delehanty** and **Laura Stockslader** have received scholarships from the Irondequoit Council of the Greater Rochester Metro Chamber of Commerce. They were among six business students from Irondequoit to be honored.

Several other Kearney students have attained various honors as well. They are: **Theresa Ladrigan**, who was selected among more than 700 applicants to be one of 40 participants in the 1994 Villanova University Young Scholars Seminar Program in Biology and Mathematics; **Holly Nerges**, **Amy Feldbauer** and **Seema Patel**, who placed first, second and third, respectively, in the poetry category of the National Essay Contest; **Jessica Boothby**, who won the State Poetry Award for the same category; and **Jody Durick** and **Michael Johnson**, whose leadership and community involvement were recognized at the Monroe County High School Students.

Eight graduates of Monroe County-based high schools have been awarded \$2,400 scholarships by the Rochester Polish People's Home, Inc. They are: **Gregory A. Grabiec**, **Tomasz Hasinski**, **Rafal M. Makuch**, **Larissa A. Shukis**, **Jason M. Solarek**, **Aleksandra H. Trzcienka**, **Malgorzata J. Waliszewski** and **Anne C. Wolpiuk**.

Reginold Royston, a recent Aquinas Institute graduate, attended the Washington Journalism Conference this past spring in Washington, D.C. He was among 370 outstanding high-school journalists from 48 states who were selected to participate in the event.

Molly Gilbert, who is entering her senior year at Mercy, placed second in the recent Cornell Prize Essay Competition. She and Mercy classmate **Joanne Myers** were both selected as finalists.



S. John Wilkin/Staff photographer

Sara Hladis depicts a girl who falls into a trap of temptations and ends up alone during a performance of the 'Turnaround' skit by Fairport's Church of the Assumption youth group. The ensemble performed during the Marian Conference's youth segment on July 23.



Faced with the thought of suicide, the girl cries out for help and is accepted by Jesus.

Strong messages typify program

By Mike Latona
Staff writer

ROCHESTER — From reenactments of the sorrowful mysteries to fiery declarations by guest speakers, last weekend's Marian Conference was a high-intensity event not only for adults, but for youth participants as well.

Opening activities on Friday evening, July 22, featured a stunning performance by youth-group members from Church of the Assumption in Fairport. The ensemble graphically recreated Christ's crucifixion for the largely adult congregation at the Rochester Riverside Convention Center.

Church of the Assumption returned the next day to stage its "Turnaround" skit during a four-hour youth program. This performance — set to Bonnie Tyler's 1983 hit song "Total Eclipse of the Heart" — depicts a high school girl who is deceived by the lure of vices such as drugs and alcohol. But, when things become so bad that she considers suicide, she calls out for Jesus and is saved.

"I've seen people crying, and the younger people hanging onto their parents for dear life," said 21-year-old Jason Augustine, who portrayed the eerie, black-clad "Suicide."

But, Augustine pointed out, the ultimate message is an uplifting one — that youths can overcome evil influences through Jesus' love. "It makes people think. And when they think, they begin to act on their feelings," Augustine observed. In addition to "Turnaround," the con-

ference's youth segment featured upbeat Christian rock tunes from the group "Radix" as well as stirring messages from adult speakers.

Father Kenneth J. Roberts, who has written seven books and makes numerous appearances on the Eternal Word Television Network, rued the decline in traditional Roman Catholic observances during his address to the youth gathering.

The priest, a native of England, noted that "80 percent of the kids" he meets on retreats don't know what it means to genuflect, and that very few children are taught to dip their hand in holy water anymore.

He maintained that children find Mass boring because its nuances are not explained thoroughly enough.

"Your generation has not been taught the way your parents and grandparents were," he told the audience. "If you just sit at a Mass and watch a ritual, it's not interesting. But what makes baseball, basketball and football interesting is the content, not the ritual."

Father Roberts was especially animated about the importance of Sunday Mass, noting that every religion in the

world sets aside one day per week for such observances.

"It's not your day, it's God's day!" he thundered. "Six days of the week are yours; one belongs to God. When you decide not to go to church and not to worship, you're saying, 'I'm stealing God's day.'"

Father Roberts concluded his talk by inviting any boys to come forward who may be considering the priesthood so he could give them a special blessing. Ten came up to the stage, and another 17 girls joined them when the priest offered a similar blessing for those thinking about becoming women religious. Even more youths emerged when Father Roberts made the blessing inclusive of other vocations such as the diaconate.

In an interview following his speech, Father Roberts noted that this response is typical of other youth conferences at which he appears. He added that the level of young adults seeking vocations would rise dramatically if more adult Catholics would follow his own vociferous example.

"Maybe (the adults are) scared. Maybe they don't challenge enough," Father Roberts remarked.



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